

A n n e k e J A N S a n d E v e r a r d u s B O G A R D U S

D e s c e n d a n t s A s s o c i a t i o n

Information Paper

by

W i l l i a m B r o w e r B o g a r d u s



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Anneke JANS and Everardus BOGARDUS Descendants Association
1121 Linhof Road
Wilmington, OH 45177-2917

Ph: (937) 382-3803

O c t o b e r 1 9 9 6

1. Descendants Association Membership: This Descendants Association is an informal organization, with its principal purpose being to alive the interest in our ancestors and to create a common bond of friendship among their descendants. There are no charges to become a member and no periodic dues. The only criteria for membership is that you agree with the above stated purpose and share whatever family information you care to provide - thus allowing us to help you learn more about your family. We are primarily interested in obtaining further information about the descendant lines of Anneke JANS and the BOGARDUS and BROUWER, BROWER and BREWER families but I am also willing to assist our member "cousins" with their research of other colonial families in New York and New Jersey however possible; and there is no charge for this assistance. (See paragraph 8 below for further information) The periodic "Dear Cousin" newsletter is also provided to keep you informed of our activities.

2. Research Background: My research efforts began when I was living in the Washington, DC area in 1962. To date, we have a record of approximately 500,000 descendants of Anneke JANS from the children of her first marriage to Roelof JANSEN and of second marriage to Dr. Everardus BOGARDUS. We believe this to be only a fraction of the several million probable descendants. I have outgrown (and no longer keep up-to-date) a BOGARDUS family chart, measuring 3'x30", which depicts 12-14 descendant generations from the early 1600s to the present. In my research activities, I have: corresponded with over 5,000 BOGARDUS and allied families and 250 selected libraries and genealogical and historical societies - and now correspond with about 1,250 current generation descendant "cousins" and about a dozen professional genealogists and historians; performed extensive research at the Library of Congress, National Archives and National Library of the Department of the Interior in Washington, DC, the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, the Allen County Public Library at Fort Wayne, IN, and at nearly 100 other special and local libraries around the country; acquired full copies or relevant extracts of approximately 1,000 published genealogies or articles pertaining to Anneke JANS and her descendants and many hundreds of items on the descendants of Adam BROUWER. I have extracted or obtained BOGARDUS gravestone inscriptions from scores of cemeteries (principally in the East); pension record abstracts from the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Civil War and Spanish American War for all BOGARDUS veterans or family members who so applied; most BOGARDUS entries from the Federal Census records of all states in the U.S. from 1790 to 1900 and from New York State Census records for the principal counties of BOGARDUS residence from 1855 to 1875; and all BOGARDUS entries from the directories of approximately 20 major cities in the U.S. from the earliest date of publication to 1900 and about 30 other cities for various periods. I have also located the repository of about 70 file boxes of genealogical information that had been acquired by one of the Anneke JANS BOGARDUS heirs associations in the early 1900s relating to one of the suits against Trinity Church. This file of information is located at the Library of Michigan in Lansing, and we have a copy of the page inventory index of this data by the names of the approximate 8 submitters. I have made several attempts to have this collection microfilmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah but have been unsuccessful to date. The main reasons given for not microfilming this material have been their higher priority for microfilming original vital records and the problems associated with their having to obtain the approval of the families included in the records as a result of recent copyright requirements. During more recent years, I have had the privilege of assisting many hundreds of "cousins" with their research on families other than those of my own personal interest and, as a result, I have become both qualified and confident that I can now assist almost anyone regarding their early New York and New Jersey colonial families.

3. Principal Allied Families: As you might imagine, there are literally thousands of families that have a relationship to the descendant lines from Anneke JANS. Some of the families that are descended from the children of Anneke's first marriage to Roelof JANSEN through the first six generations are: KIERSTEDT/KIERSTEAD, RODENBURG, VAN BRUGH, BAYLOR, KIP, TELLER, DE KAY, GREVENRAEDT, VAN RENSSELAER, RICHARD, DE GROEN, DAVIDS, TRAPHAGEN, DE WITT, ROSENKRANS, WYNKOOP, ELMENDORF, CHAMBERLAIN, ROMME, VAN RANST, VAN VLECK, STOUTENBURGH, LIVINGSTON, WENDELL, CLOPPER, HAMERSLEY, TEN BROECK, DOUW, CROOKE, RAY, DUYCKING, TENNENT, MANSFIELD,

HEYDEN, SLEGHT, KONING, RYCKMAN, LOUW, HOUGHTALING, SMEDES, MANCIUS, WESTFALL, VAN AKEN, VAN VREDENBURGH, SCHOONMAKER, VAN WINKLE, TEN EYCK, BOUCHELLE, SALISBURY, DELAMATER, HOFFMAN, WARNER, BRESTEDE, ROSET, CADMUS, BUYS, VALENTINE, TAYLOR, ALEXANDER, VAUGHTON, DE HART, QUINCY, RUTGERS, LANSING, SCHUYLER, GANSEVOORT, VAN DYCK, BEEKMAN, CUYLER and NICHOL. Some of the families descended from Anneke's children by her second marriage to Domine BOGARDUS through the first six generations are: BROUWER/BROWER/BREWER, VIELE, VAN PELT, VAN DEURSEN, ELSWORTH, BRONCK, VAN VECHTEN, SCOTT, QUACKENBUSH, PETIT, VAN NOTE, CHILD, BRINKERHOFF, VAN VLECK, VAN SCHAICK, WYNKOOP, OOSTERHOUT, VAN BUREN, DE DUYSER/DUTCHER, DECKER, HALLENBECK, BRADT/BRATT, WILLIAMS, BRIES, GROESBECK, DE WANDELAER, BANKER, VAN TASSEL, CONNER, HARTJE, MARSH, ELLIS, ANDERSON, LA PETRA, MORRIS, LIPPINCOTT, PEARCE, WALKER, WALDRON, MABIE, FIELD, DEERING, TILTON, TILLOU, LEGGETT, VAN HOUSEN, SCHUYLER, VAN DER POEL, BUCHANAN, HELM, CROSS, VAN KEUREN, VAN DER LYN, VAN TYNE, PUDNEY, WILSON, LAWSON, PIERSON, MEYNDERTSE, GASHIERIE, TAPPEN, DE MEYER, TERWILLIGER, CONYN, VAN DEN BURGH, SPOOR, VAN LOON, LOTTRIDGE, FONDA, VAN DER WERKEN, YATES, HUYCK, VAN ALSTYNE, CLAUW, SHARP/SHERP, SICKLES, DE VOE, TER BOS, BENNETT - and countless others.

4. BROUWER - BROWER - BREWER Interests: Since my own ancestry extends back through the BROUWER families of Dutchess and Westchester Counties, NY, I have had a special interest in this family and am therefore compiling a major record of the descendants of the immigrant Adam BROUWER BERCHOVEN and his wife, Magdalena Jacobs VERDON. As opposed to the BOGARDUS family, where there is overwhelming evidence of only one common progenitor of this family in America (Everardus BOGARDUS), there are several completely different BROUWER and BROWER (and at least three BREWER) immigrant families and all too often the children of different family lines with these names have resided together in the same general areas and are incorrectly identified as being descended from Adam BROUWER - - and quite frequently from Adam's son, Jacobus BROUWER, who married Anna BOGARDUS. Therefore, in order to properly identify each BROUWER, BROWER or BREWER descendant with his (or her) correct parentage and ancestry, it became necessary to research all the descendant lines of the early BROUWER, BROWER and BREWER immigrants. The material we have thus acquired on these families, while not quite as extensive as on the descendants of Anneke JANS, is nevertheless believed to be more than any single library or society would possess. The most accurate and accepted BROUWER genealogy is "Brouwer Beginnings - The First Three Generations of the Adam BROUWER BERCHOVEN Family", by William J. Hoffman, published in the Apr. 1947 and Jan., Apr. and Jul. 1948 issues of "The American Genealogist", with corrections and additions in the Jan. 1950, Jul. 1954 and Jan. 1955 issues. In this regard, I have also located Mr. Hoffman's manuscript of this genealogy and it is a principal source for limited information on several additional generations. Notwithstanding his preeminent reputation as one of the foremost researchers of early Dutch families, I have re-researched his material - - finding only very few points of disagreement but quite a number of additional family connections. Our personal library of information on these families also includes about a dozen or more published genealogies and unpublished manuscripts; extracts of BROUWER and BROWER entries from many Dutch Reformed (and other) church records; gravestone inscriptions; will abstracts; page extracts from hundreds of other published historical and genealogical sources; all issues of "The BROWER Family Circle", by Jay W. Brower, published quarterly between April 1976 and July 1986; and a great many unpublished items such as bible and court records, diaries, charts and family data obtained from the libraries and genealogical societies within the areas of their early residence. Having become somewhat of a "clearing house" for many descendants seeking further information about their correct ancestry to one of the immigrant families by these names, has resulted in our receipt of scores of items of relatively obscure data and numerous family lineages. All of this material has permitted many heretofore unknown ancestral lineages to be developed and shared with others. Some of the families that have a connection to the descendant lines from Adam BROUWER (other than those that are also descended from Anneke JANS through Jacobus BROUWER and Anna BOGARDUS), are: STAGG, BOVIE/BOVEE, ENNIS, KETELHUYN, DE GROOT, TALLMAN, BANTA, LOSEE, JORALEMON, FORMAN, DEMAREST, WESTERVELT, VAN HOORN, VAN DER BEEK, WARD, JACOBS, VAN GELDER, VAN VOORHEES, RATAN, PETERSON, JOHNSON, DRAKE, HENDRICKS, WOLL, BUYS, COUSYN, VOS, BENNETT, LEEUW, BURGER, VAN DUYN, ELSWORTH, PARSELL, VREDENBURGH, GESNER, VAN SANT, CONCKLIN, KIP, TURNER, GEE, THORP, SWARTWOUT - and others too numerous to mention.

5. Descendants Association Library: This may one day be referred to as the "Anneke JANS BOGARDUS and BROUWER-BROWER-BREWER Genealogical Collection." Its holdings are intended to be left to a major library, historical or genealogical society, university or foundation and - preferably - to be made available as a special research entity, not to be integrated with the vast holdings of a worldwide, national or general collection of genealogical data. Its present and continued usefulness stems from the fact that it is specialized and compact. Although shelf space and filing cabinets are now almost filled to capacity, I would venture to say that this library now holds 90% or more of the most widely used and hard-to-find research materials pertaining to the colonial families of New York and New Jersey that are related to the descendant lines of Anneke JANS and of Adam BROUWER - - all within a recently added 16'x20' room. Almost every item in this library has been cataloged, including the family information received during the past 34+ years from correspondents in all parts of the U.S. and from Canada, Peru, Germany, New Zealand, Brazil, England, Netherlands and Belgium. One feature is that the records of over 200 early churches of New York and New Jersey are on file for ready reference. Here is a broad overview of our library's holdings:

a. Resource Catalogs: The extensive genealogy and local history catalogs (in book form) of the DAR Library in Washington, DC and the Library of Congress are major sources for determining what information has already been compiled in years past. In addition, the Family History Library's "Surname Catalog" (342 fiche); partial U.S. and Canada and full Netherlands "Locality Catalog (163 fiche); and the "International Genealogical Index (IGI)" for selected states in the U.S. and provinces of Canada, plus all of the Netherlands (858 fiche - for approximately 16 million names) are also held by this library. Several other catalogs which summarize the holdings of such libraries as the "Montgomery County Department of History and Archives" and "New Jersey Archives" are also on file. Current sales catalogs are received from approximately 20 commercial genealogy and local history book suppliers and the catalogs of "Genealogical and Local History Books In Print" are also obtained as they are issued. I have always felt that one of the keys to successful research is knowing what is already available on the families and localities of your interest.

b. Periodicals: Our library holds the entire set of "The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record", with all available indexes; most issues of "de Halve Maen" (the quarterly journal of The Holland Society of New York) from 1923 to the present; "Everton's Genealogical Helper" from Sep. 1966 to the present; and from a few issues to all issues (or at least copied extracts of articles pertaining to early New York and New Jersey) of such items as "Year Books of The Holland Society of New York"; "Westchester County Historian"; Orange County (NY) Genealogical Quarterly"; "The Dutchess"; "The Genealogical Magazine of New Jersey"; "The New Jersey Genesis"; "New York History"; "The American Genealogist"; "National Genealogical Society Quarterly"; "Dutch Settlers Society of Albany Yearbooks"; "Dutch Family Heritage Society Quarterly"; "Yesteryears"; "de Nieuw Nederlanse Mercurius" (the quarterly newsletter of The New Netherland Project; "The NYG&B Newsletter"; "Somerset County Historical Quarterly"; "Somerset County Genealogical Quarterly"; "New England Historical and Genealogical Register"; and scattered others and indexes of some of those mentioned. Since we do not hold all issues of these items, anyone who might be considering disposing of their copies of these periodicals - or others not mentioned - are encouraged to contact us for possible acquisition. Not held at all, are issues of "The Capital", "The Saratoga", "The Columbia", "The Mohawk", "Greene Genes" and the indexes of the "New England Historical and Genealogical Register" which are highly desired. We also have 23 of the 31 "Genealogical Periodical Annual Index" volumes but only selected pages of the very comprehensive "Periodical Source Index (PERSI)". PERSI is a very expensive set of books, which I refer to frequently when we visit a major genealogical library and, hopefully, it too might be acquired sometime in the future.

c. Reference Books: Our library holds approximately 800 carefully selected genealogies, church records, county and local histories, cemetery records, abstracts of wills, historical documentaries, newspaper records of marriages and deaths, military indexes and abstracts, hereditary society lineages and indexes, atlases and gazetteers, compendiums of

compiled data, early translated records of New Amsterdam, Quaker records, source indexes, immigration and property information, bibliographies and numerous "how to" books for nearly all subjects pertaining to U.S. genealogy and history. Hard to find books such as the "Iconography of Manhattan Island, 1498-1909" (Vols. I, II, IV & VI only); "Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New York" - 15 vols; "Documentary History of New York" - 4 vols; "New Jersey Archives - Abstracts of Wills - 1670-1817" - 13 vols; "Records of New Amsterdam, 1653-1674" - 7 vols., and 24 other volumes of early New Netherland documents translated under the sponsorship of The New Netherland Project; and others - are included. A wide selection of early maps are also maintained.

d. Pertinent Page Extracts from Books, Periodicals, etc.: It is impractical to obtain full copies of all the books pertaining to the interests of this Descendants Association. Therefore, for the past 20+ years, we have copied 45,000 - 50,000 pages of material from over 2,000 relevant books and other items we have had access to at the various libraries we have visited. We maintain a continuing list of items that we are searching for and, once found and depending on its research value, the necessary pages (or sometimes the entire book) are copied for our own library's holdings. Obviously many of these items have long since been out of print and no single library has them all. Some items have also been obtained through our local library's "Inter-Library Loan" service and pages copied at home, if considered necessary. Every page of every item is then trimmed, cataloged and filed for easy (?) access.

e. Microfilms: We presently own approximately 250 rolls of microfilm, which have been very carefully selected and primarily purchased from The Genealogical Society of Utah in Salt Lake City. They include the very extensive research collection of material pertaining to the early colonial families of New York and New Jersey by the noted genealogist and historian, George O. Zabriskie. This collection is predominantly unindexed, on 25 rolls of microfilm, but consists of approximately 50,000 pages of material. Having obtained the permission of Harry B. Zabriskie to obtain a copy of this material, following his brother's death in 1988, our Descendants Association may be the only holder of this collection outside of The Family History Library in Salt Lake City. I have been attempting to prepare a sub-index to this collection beyond the description of its content in the Family History Library's "Surname Catalog" under the name "ZABRISKIE". Other microfilms include Jonathan Pearson's manuscripts of "Genealogies of the First Settlers of the Ancient County of Albany - From 1630-1800" and "Contributions for the Genealogies of the Descendants of the First Settlers of the Patent and City of Schenectady from 1662 to 1800"; the collections of family genealogists and historians Helen Wilkinson Reynolds, Walter Beach Plume, William Applebie Daniel Eardeley and Stelle Fitz Randolph (32 rolls); abstracts of New York wills from the Collections of the New York Historical Society; seven volumes of "Ecclesiastical Records of the State of New York"; the 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880 and 1900 Federal Census records for Dutchess and Greene Counties, New York; most of the 1855, 1865 and 1875 New York State Census records for the counties of Albany, Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Rensselaer, Schoharie, Tompkins and Ulster, with approvals to obtain (as our finances permit) these records for the same years for the counties of Chataqua, Steuben, Onondaga, Erie, Herkimer, Rockland, Saratoga, and Schenectady. Other microfilms pertain to copies of early Methodist, Presbyterian and Dutch Reformed church records for selected locations in New York; early original court records for Albany, Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Montgomery and Rensselaer counties - with approvals to obtain others; selected membership applications and genealogical data of The Holland Society of New York; and "The VOSBURGH Collection" - consisting of 101 typewritten volumes of New York church records covering 17 counties on 13 rolls purchased from The New York Genealogical and Biographical Society. Only the Library of Congress, New York State Library, New York Historical Society, Connecticut State Library, The New York Genealogical and Biographical Society and the Family History Library have had copies of these records until very recently when these microfilm copies were made available to the public and other libraries.

f. Correspondence: I have corresponded with over 5,000 "cousins" since 1962 and every item of genealogical or historical value has been

retained and cataloged according to each correspondents line of descent from Anneke JANS or from Adam BROUWER (or alphabetically by correspondent and by surnames of interest if not among the lineages just stated). This now amounts to about 25 lineal feet of letters, Pedigree Charts, Family Group Records, pictures, supporting data, copies of family charts, etc. I could never begin to describe the numerous "gems" of information that have been received and which are not held by any other library at all.

6. Items Published by this Descendants Association:

a. "Anneke JANS-BOGARDUS and Adam BROUWER Research Aid Bibliography". As a byproduct of my review of the many items on file within our library in 1989, to determine each one's genealogical value, a bibliographic listing of a vast majority of published material evolved. This 46-page bibliography identifies 172 sources of published information about Anneke JANS; 487 sources for BOGARDUS; and 372 sources relating to the descendant lines of Adam BROUWER. It was estimated at that time that over 7,000 items of published material had been reviewed to compile this record. Few, if any, colonial families will have such an extensive listing of published sources for genealogical research. Users of this bibliography will be saved countless numbers of hours, months or years of research time. The bibliography was very favorably reviewed in the January 1990 issue of The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record, by Henry B. Hoff, Editor; and in the July 1990 issue of "The American Genealogist", by Donn Devine. Approximately 100 copies were donated to various libraries and genealogical societies around the country. No original copies are now available but an uncovered Xerox copy can be provided for \$12.50 postpaid.

b. "Directory of Genealogical and Historical Articles Published in "de Halve Maen" from 1923 to 1991". During my many years of research, I found that "de Halve Maen", the quarterly journal of The Holland Society of New York, contained some very excellent genealogical and historical articles on the early Dutch families and localities of New York and New Jersey. Some items also provided data on the origin of various families in Holland and, in some instances, family lines were extended into the "frontier" states of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Kentucky and elsewhere. Unfortunately, "de Halve Maen" is not generally available at most libraries and thus the vast majority of researchers having early Dutch families in their ancestry are unaware of the valuable material that is available. After finally obtaining a copy of each past issue of this esteemed historical journal (or extract copy of the principal genealogical and historical articles), we developed the directory as titled above. The directory identifies 776 main articles and 189 additional anecdotal type items. The precise title of each article, author, date of publication and page numbers are included, with an abbreviated surname index pertaining only to the names which have appeared in article titles. You will be fascinated by just reading the titles of these articles and, as you do, you may also experience the gift of serendipity. Copies of desired articles can also be separately obtained. This directory is still available for \$7.00, postpaid.

c. "Dear Cousin": A Charted Genealogy of the Descendants of Anneke JANS BOGARDUS (1605-1663) to the 5th Generation". This hard-cover book, published in August 1996, is the culmination of many years of research and re-research of material previously published - the most recent in the July 1925 (Vol. 56) issue of "The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record", under the title: "Anneke JANS (1607-87-1663) and Her Two Husbands, Roelof JANS (or JANSEN) and Rev. (Domine) Everardus BOGARDUS and Their Descendants to the Third Generation", by John Reynolds Totten. The new book is 192 pages in length, 8 1/2"x11" size, includes 72 detailed charts and is fully indexed. All known vital data is provided; previous errors in other published articles or genealogies have been correct and new data is included; the most frequent errors and unproven lines of descent are explained, with examples; sources are identified in an extensive bibliography, keyed to the charts; descendants of Marritje JANS, sister of Anneke, have been similarly included in the same amount of detail; and the copyright explicitly permits the charts to be copied and used under certain conditions; and more. Copies are available for \$29.50 postpaid to U.S. addresses and \$33.00 postpaid to Canadian and overseas addresses.

7. Intended Publications: It is our opinion that no other single library - nor any individual - has ever acquired as much information as we have obtained on these families. Therefore, in addition to providing assistance on an individual basis, it is our intention to eventually publish the following items for use by researchers in generations to follow:

a. A second volume of the descendants of Anneke JANS (but not of her sister, Marritje), to the 6th and 7th generations.

b. A new book, possibly titled: "Dear Cousin": A Charted Genealogy of the Descendants of Jan BROUWER (ca.1632-1702+) of Flatlands to the 5th Generation".

c. A new book, possibly titled: "Dear Cousin": A Charted Genealogy of the Descendants of Adam BROUWER BERCHOVEN (ca.1620-1693) to the 6th Generation". (Maybe to the 7th generation).

d. A revised and expanded version of the "Anneke JANS-BOGARDUS and Adam BROUWER Research Aid Bibliography", published in 1989, to incorporate approximately 850 additional sources that have also been identified; plus a useful listing of the principal early churches containing BOGARDUS AND BROUWER/BROWER baptisms and marriages.

e. A new book, possibly titled: "Directory of Genealogical and Historical Articles Published in The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record from 1870 to 1996".

f. BOGARDUS collections of: (1) Birth, baptisms, marriage and bible records; (2) Will abstracts, deaths and gravestone inscriptions; (3) City Directory and Census Record extracts; (4) Pension record abstracts; and (5) BROUWER/BROWER collections of the same as (1) and (2) herein.

8. Research Assistance Policy: As you have noted above, this Descendants Association has acquired a very considerable library of genealogical source material over a period of approximately 34 years. It is a very specialized collection, primarily devoted to the direct and allied descendant family lines of Anneke JANS and the BOGARDUS and BROUWER/BROWER/BREWER families although its holdings now also include a rather significant collection of data on other early colonial families and localities of New York and New Jersey as well. The Family History Library in Salt Lake City, the Allen County (IN) Public Library, and others, are obviously much larger than ours - and they certainly do contain much more information than within the small 16'x20' room in our home. However, it would take a very considerable amount of time to locate, read and perhaps copy the material found to be relevant to the specialized holdings of our Descendants Association Library - and there are some items held here that are not available in any other library at all.

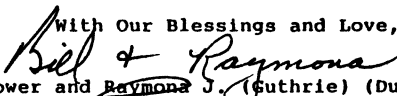
One of the benefits of your membership in this Descendants Association is that I will provide research assistance for all those who correspond and thus I believe you can readily understand why we would not want to formally advertise this service in genealogical periodicals or on the internet. We're kept busy enough by just the word-of-mouth referrals that have been made by our corresponding "cousins" to others. I will attempt to give priority attention to those requests (and accompanying data) that pertain to the descendant lines of Anneke JANS and the BOGARDUS and BROUWER/BROWER/BREWER families but will, nevertheless, assist however I can on other early colonial New York and New Jersey family lines as well. There is no charge for this service but I must rely upon your requests being prudent and not too extensive or frequent. For example, requests to review complete Pedigree Charts and/or Family Group Records would be more than I should be expected to do since this would require a great deal of research time. As a guideline for the type of requests that will be honored and with a higher probability of results - this criteria applies: (1) provide Pedigree and/or Family Group Records to identify the names of individuals, dates and localities pertaining to the specific inquiry being submitted; (2) limit requests for any connections to the BROUWER, BROWER or BREWER families to a time period no later than about 1850-1860; (3) for connections or research inquiries pertaining to any BOGARDUS individual or family there is no limitation of the years to be considered; and (4) for all other colonial families

of New York and New Jersey, requests should be limited from their date of immigration up to about 1800. -

It has been suggested that we should charge for my time and related costs but we truly believe that more information has been shared with this Descendants Association than would have been had our motivation been primarily for profit. In good conscience, we just could not charge the usual professional research fees of upwards of \$15.00 to \$25.00 per hour (or more). We know there are far too many elderly "cousins" or those with a very limited income that need someone to turn to for the type of research this Descendants Association can offer. And, of course, many "cousins" do not have access to such a major genealogical collection as ours to perform this research on their own. Nevertheless, costs for postage, copying, supplies and periodic copier maintenance are incurred and if it were not for the voluntary gifts of appreciation that are received from time to time, this assistance could not be continued. In this regard, we are hopeful that you will consider the value of this specialized library that is being searched for your benefit, the average of about three hours that I devote to each inquiry and the savings of many months or years of research time and the travel and expense saved as a result of this assistance. If a donation is given to help us continue this service, you should be aware that it is not tax deductible since this Descendants Association is not tax-exempt. We have investigated this option and have found that it is not presently in our best interests to obtain this tax-exempt status. You may be assured, however, that all contributions received are used only for library expenses and occasional purchases of specialized material. In some instances, "cousins" have requested that their contributions be used to obtain specific items for this library that would aid in the research of New York or New Jersey families and localities of their interest. For the purpose of also helping to meet our expenses, we offer a number or research items for sale that we believe provide the greatest amount of benefit for those who correspond. These pricelists of items are periodically changed to delete some items and add others and are included with our "Dear Cousin" newsletters.

We prefer to demonstrate that our principal intent is not to make a profit from what we're doing (although we obviously do earn a little above our costs) but to freely share as much information as we can at the least possible cost to all concerned - - or at no cost on many occasions. In this regard, we are trusting that all of our financial needs will be met and very thankfully give one tenth of all we receive, either by gifts or by "sales income", to various religious, charitable or educational institutions.

9. Computer Genealogy: You probably are of the opinion that we have much of our genealogy information on a computer and that we use a computer for our work. The fact is, however, we do not. If you could witness how the thousands of items within our library are used for research purposes and realize that my response to all requests for assistance are carefully "tailored" and usually different than all others, you would see that most of the work being done is not computer oriented. I prefer to provide a research analysis and copies of pertinent items of source documentation. Our copier, therefore, is probably the most important electronic aid in our library. I might add, we just do not have the time to enter the names, vital data and all source references for 500,000 descendants (plus data on thousands of non-descendant families) and do all the work we are presently doing. We are aware, however, of the many software programs and CDs that are available and, in some instances, have obtained printed extracts of some important data. We are not on the internet, therefore, nor do we have an E-mail address although "cousins" have been referred to us by others who are - and that's just fine. It is doubtful, however, that anyone has been disappointed with all we have already done - and yet intend to do.

With Our Blessings and Love,

William Brower and Raymona J. (Guthrie) (Dusseau) Bogardus

THE "HEIRS OF ANNEKE JANS BOGARDUS" VERSUS TRINITY CHURCH: A CHRONICLE OF NEW YORK'S MOST PROLONGED LEGAL DISPUTE

BY WILLIAM J. PARRY*

Anneke Jans Bogardus is a prominent figure in the genealogies of many New York families. Her importance is due not so much to her role in the early settlement of New Netherland, but rather to her enormous number of descendants. William Brower Bogardus has documented more than 350,000 descendants, and estimates that this represents only a fraction of the several millions that have sprung from her. Almost one hundred years ago, a Mr. Drake calculated that there were at least 9,639,000 descendants (*New York Tribune*, 8 March 1896). It is not known how he arrived at that figure.

Anneke Jans' second claim to fame rests in a farm that she owned on Manhattan Island, now some of the most valuable real estate on earth, that her multitude of descendants attempted to reclaim for a dozen generations. As John O. Evjen succinctly put it, "Anneke Jans' fame rests on property and progeny" (*Scandinavian Immigrants in New York*, p. 99). This particular combination of progeny and property resulted in two hundred years of litigation in provincial, state, and federal courts.¹

Anneke (or Annetje) Jans was born about 1605 at Flekkeroy, Norway. In 1623 she married Roelof Jansen at Amsterdam. The couple sailed to New Netherland in 1630 and settled at Rensselaerswyck (near Albany). In 1636, Roelof Jansen was granted a farm of 62 acres on Manhattan Island. This farm was bounded on the west by the Hudson River, and on the east by an irregular line between Broadway and West Broadway. The southern boundary was in the vicinity of modern Warren Street. The northern boundary was identified by the later litigants as modern Christopher Street, but most historians place it further south, near Canal and Watts Streets. This plot includes parts of the modern neighborhoods of Greenwich Village, SoHo, and Tribeca.

Roelof Jansen died soon after receiving the farm, and in March 1638, Anneke Jans married Everardus Bogardus, the dominie (or minister) of New Amsterdam. The farm was subsequently known as the "Dominie's Bouwerie" or the minister's farm. (In some of the later litigation, it became confused with another farm, "Dominie's Hook," apparently located on Long Island.) Both Dominie Bogardus and his wife appear to have been stubborn and outspoken

* I thank Bruce Abrams of the New York County Clerk's Archives, and William B. Bogardus of the Anneke Jans and Everardus Bogardus Descendants Association, for their assistance in locating source materials.

¹ The background information in the following paragraphs about Anneke Jans, her two husbands, and her descendants is primarily taken from THE RECORD 56:201-43 and 104:65-72, 157-64. Another important source is *Anneke JANS-BOGARDUS and Adam BROUWER Research Aid Bibliography* by William Brower Bogardus (Wilmington, Ohio: The Anneke Jans and Everardus Bogardus Descendants Assn., 1989). An annotated bibliography listing all of the sources used in this article will appear at the end of the second installment.

people who did not hesitate to defend their rights through legal action, a trait that seems to have been inherited by some of their descendants. Colonial records mention them in numerous legal actions involving property, debts, and slander.

Because of his strong opinions, Everardus Bogardus eventually came into conflict with the Director General, William Kieft. Finally, Dominie Bogardus and Director Kieft departed together to lay their respective accusations before the authorities in Amsterdam, but their ship *de Princesse* was wrecked on the south coast of Wales and both men drowned, 27 September 1647.

After the death of Dominie Bogardus, Anneke Jans Bogardus returned to Beverwyck (now Albany) with her children. She was granted the "Dominie's Bouwerie" in her own name by Governor Stuyvesant in 1654. She died in February 1663, leaving a will naming her eight children as heirs. Their ownership of the farm was confirmed by the English Governor Nicolls in 1667. On 9 March 1670 (o.s.), five of the heirs executed a "transport" conveying their interest in the farm, in fee, to Colonel Francis Lovelace, then governor of New York (and landlord of the adjoining "Company's Bouwerie" to the south). This conveyance omits the name of Cornelis Bogardus, one of the heirs (who had died in 1666, leaving a widow and newborn son), and its validity has been challenged on that ground.

Governor Lovelace's properties were subsequently confiscated by the Crown (and henceforth known as the "King's Farm"). In 1697, Trinity Church was incorporated by royal charter, and in the same year Governor Fletcher leased the King's Farm to Trinity for a term of seven years. In 1705, the farm (then known as the "Queen's Farm") was granted outright to the Trinity Church Corporation by Lord Cornbury (then Governor) in the name of Queen Anne. This grant, which fails to designate the northern and southern boundaries of the property, has been questioned on several grounds: that the Bogardus farm was not included, that the grant was invalid and illegal, or that it was implicitly revoked by subsequent decrees.

For more than 200 years, various descendants of Anneke Jans claimed to retain ownership of the farm, and sought to recover it through legal action. Their extraordinary efforts, displaying a remarkable mixture of faith, righteousness, stubbornness, naiveness, and delusion, are chronicled here. It is not my purpose to judge the merits of their claim—the legal questions have long been settled—but rather to document this fascinating episode in the history of a large and distinguished family.

It should be noted that most of the claimants appear to have been authentic descendants of Anneke Jans, although documentation is usually lacking. This contrasts with the claims of other families, such as the "Edwards heirs" (to be encountered in the second installment) and the "Drake heirs," in which many unrelated people falsely claimed to be descendants, solely on the basis of the same common surname.

The origins of the dispute lie in the geography of the property. As a farm, the land had little value. It was partly swamp and partly rock, uncleared and

unfenced, and located at an inconvenient distance from the settlement. Most of the farm was north of the stockades or city walls, where it was unprotected and subject to the depredations of native peoples and wild animals. Anneke Jans Bogardus and her children lived more than 150 miles away in Albany, and probably paid little attention to the property. During her lifetime, the farm was leased to a succession of tenants for nominal rent, and otherwise neglected by the Bogardus family.

By 1740 the city had expanded to the point where the farm had become desirable residential property, and was now sufficiently valuable to be worth fighting over. However, the land was not actually settled until after the Revolution. A map of 1782 shows Warren and Chambers Streets as the northernmost edge of the city, Reade Street laid out but undeveloped, and the area north of Reade Street and west of Broadway vacant, except for a military hospital and gardens. The streets from Reade to Canal were laid out in 1803. Today, of course, the entire area is completely built over, except for a tiny triangle in the intersection of Duane and Hudson Streets, now known as Duane Park. This plot was purchased from Trinity by the City of New York in 1795, for five dollars. A plaque there proclaims it to be "the last remnant of greensward of the Annetje Jans Farm."

In 1740, most of the farm was still unfenced and unimproved, and the history of its ownership over the previous eighty years had been largely forgotten. There were no records of the sale of the property by the Bogardus family, or of its incorporation into the King's Farm (the 1670 "Lovelace transport" did not resurface until 1785). It was in this context that some of the descendants of Anneke Jans Bogardus began to question the claim of the Trinity Corporation to be the sole and exclusive owner of the land. Since Trinity could not document its acquisition of the property, and was not conspicuously in possession of it (as the farm was virtually uninhabited), its claim to ownership seemed tenuous. If the church was not the legitimate owner of the farm, then perhaps the property still belonged to the Bogardus heirs.

In some respects, the dispute reflected many of the underlying tensions which divided colonial New York. It pitted English against Dutch, Anglican against Reformed, Establishment against Anti-Establishment, and Tory against Whig. Possibly these social and political divisions fueled the dispute, and contributed to its extraordinary longevity.

The earliest mention of the dispute is found in the minutes of the Vestry of Trinity Church for August 1738, which notes that a claim had been raised against the church by "the Heirs of one Bogardus." The first recorded legal actions were brought in the 1740s by (and against) members of the Brower (or Brouwer) family, who were descendants of Anna Bogardus Brouwer (a daughter of Willem Bogardus and granddaughter of Anneke Jans). At this time, Trinity had leased the disputed property to Adam Vandenburg. The Brower family objected, and seized the property, built a small house, and forced Vandenburg out. Because of their actions, Jacob Brower and other

members of his family were charged by Trinity with forcible entry and trespass. They were convicted on 3 August 1746, and ordered to pay damages and return the property to Vandenburg.

Despite this ruling, the Brower family continued to claim and exercise ownership of the property. The next suit was begun in 1749 by Cornelius Brower and one of his tenants. Brower had leased the entire farm, including a house, a barn, and 63 [sic] acres of land, to James Jackson on 1 October 1747. As noted, the Trinity Corporation had previously leased the same land to Adam Vandenburg. Jackson sued Trinity in the New York Supreme Court, to eject Vandenburg. The court ruled in favor of Trinity, 16 October 1751 (parchment roll P-84-F-10). Despite winning the case, it appears that Vandenburg did not continue his lease, and on 17 February 1752, Trinity advertised for a new tenant in *The New-York Gazette*: "TO BE LETT, That part of the CHURCH'S FARM (commonly called the *King's Farm*) which lies to the Northward of the Stockadoes, either entire or in Parcels." However, Jackson had also been evicted from the land as a result of the ruling.

Jackson and Brower filed a new suit in the Supreme Court in 1757, charging that Trinity had wrongfully ejected Jackson from the property. Because of its importance, the case was tried "at the bar" before Judge David Jones of Queens County (an impartial judge could not be found in Manhattan, as all were members of the Trinity Corporation). After numerous hearings, including an inspection of the property by members of the jury, the court reached its verdict on 22 October 1760. The outcome was reported in *The New-York Mercury* on 27 October 1760: "Last Week a remarkable Tryal, which has been in the Law near 20 Years, came on in the Supreme Court here, between *The Rector and Inhabitants of the City of New-York of the Church of England, as by Law Established*, and the Family of the *Browers*, who sued for 62 Acres of the King's Farm; when the Jury, after being out about 20 Minutes, gave their Verdict in favour of the *Defendants*." Trinity then filed a countersuit against Jackson and Brower to recover damages and expenses, and the Supreme Court of the Province again ruled in favor of Trinity on 22 March 1762 (parchment roll P-38-L-3).

Despite these losses, the heirs continued to claim the property. In 1773, a vacant part of the land was enclosed by Cornelius C. Bogardus (the great-grandson of Anneke Jans' son Cornelis Bogardus) who, together with other heirs, built a small house, erected fences, and planted fields. Supporters of Trinity Church attempted to evict them by force, destroying their property and threatening physical violence. Crops were destroyed, fences were torn down and burned, five men were wounded with bird-shot, an old woman was kicked in the eye, and several people were scalded with boiling water.

On 27 December 1773, Cornelius C. Bogardus petitioned Governor Tryon for redress for trespasses committed by Trinity Church in burning his fences. He did not obtain satisfaction, so in April 1774 he brought suit in the Supreme Court of the Province against Vanderclief Norwood and three other agents of Trinity. They were convicted of stealing, carrying away, and destroying by

fire, boards from a fence belonging to Bogardus (but acquitted of the more serious charge of arson). Judge Jones fined each of the offenders a nominal sum of six pence damages. This appears to be the only monetary award ever recovered by any of the heirs.

Needless to say, this ruling did not deter the Trinity Corporation, and their agents continued to harass the heirs in 1775. Although the heirs were able to withstand these attacks by Trinity, they could not resist the British army. As supporters of the Revolution, the heirs were forced to flee the city during the British invasion in 1776. Perhaps they had the satisfaction of watching Trinity Church burn to the ground when the retreating patriots set fire to the city.

After the British evacuated the city in 1783, the heirs returned and petitioned the temporary governing council, but in January 1784 the council ruled in favor of Trinity, agreeing with Trinity's assertion "that if ever [the heirs] had a right it was extinguished by the length of possession against them." Despite this ruling, the heirs attempted to reoccupy the farm in 1784. Cornelius C. Bogardus again built a small house or "shack" in order to claim possession, and was joined in his efforts by his brother Lewis Bogardus, together with Egbert Bogardus, Everardus Bogardus, Cornelius Cooper, Abraham Brower Sr., Abraham Brower Jr., Susan Broad, William Malcolm, and others. Once again, there were several violent confrontations between the heirs and the agents of Trinity Church, and between the tenants of both parties. Fences, crops, and other property belonging to both sides were damaged during numerous encounters in the years 1784 and 1785. Detailed accounts of these actions are preserved in an anonymous pamphlet of 1785, "Some Remarks on the Memorial and Remonstrance of the Corporation of Trinity Church" (reprinted in *Collections of the New-York Historical Society for the Year 1870*), and in testimony recorded in 1847 during a subsequent suit (4 Sandford Chancery 633).

A serious setback to the heirs occurred in December 1785, when Balthazar De Hart (an employee of Alexander Hamilton) stumbled across the 1670 "Lovelace transport" while researching in the city archives, and promptly brought it to the attention of Trinity Church officials. In gratitude, the church presented him with a fine silver tankard.

In 1786, John Keating, who was a tenant of Trinity Corporation, filed suits in the New York Supreme Court against Cornelius C. Bogardus and William Malcolm, claiming that they had led a mob that damaged his fences, trampled his grass, stole his crops, and forcefully and unlawfully evicted him. The suits were heard by Chief Justice Richard Morris, who ruled in favor of Keating in both cases in September 1786 (parchment rolls P-24-F-8, P-67-A-2, P-71-L-4, P-77-B-5 and P-209-F-1). Bogardus was fined a nominal sum of six pence damages after admitting his guilt (plus 36 pounds, 14 shillings, and six pence in court costs). Malcolm, who was represented by his attorney Aaron Burr, was not so lucky. He was fined more than 90 pounds in damages (with court costs, a total of 129 pounds nine pence). Since Burr was representing Trinity

in other cases at this time, one wonders if there might have been a conflict of interest. Regardless, as a result of this ruling, Cornelius C. Bogardus abandoned his claims, and turned his "possession house" over to the other heirs. A few months later in 1787, the remaining heirs were forcefully evicted from the farm, never to return.

Despite their losses, the heirs continued to demand their "rights." In March 1788 they published an unsigned public notice announcing their determination to support their claim, and protesting a proposed sale by Trinity of lots on Reade Street, Chambers Street, and Warren Street. In 1795, one of the heirs filed an "exemplification" (or copy) of the 1667 patent from Governor Nicolls in the Indorsed Land Papers (vol. LX, p. 113) at Albany, no doubt in anticipation of future litigation.

About 1806 a suit was brought in the New York Supreme Court by Colonel Richard M. Malcolm and others, who sought to eject a tenant of Trinity's named Martin Bromeling. Richard Malcolm was a son of William Malcolm, who had died in 1791, and who had inherited a claim to the Anneke Jans estate from Samuel Bayard (a descendant of Anneke Jans' daughter Sara Roelofs; it appears that Malcolm was not a descendant himself). He claimed prior possession, asserting that William Malcolm had taken possession of the land in 1784, having found the farm deserted at that time. (For some reason, the 1786 ruling was overlooked.) Aaron Burr, who had been an executor of Bayard's will, again represented the plaintiffs. Judge Tompkins ruled in favor of Trinity, 22 April 1807.

In 1830 a suit was filed by John Bogardus, a son of Cornelius C. Bogardus (who had died in 1794). He sued as a heir of Anneke Jans' son Cornelis Bogardus, who allegedly had retained ownership of an undivided one-sixth of the farm after the other heirs had conveyed their shares to Colonel Lovelace (and therefore was a tenant in common with Trinity). He also challenged the validity of the 1705 grant to Trinity. After the death of John Bogardus on 8 March 1832, the suit was revived by his children and grandchildren. Chancellor Walworth ruled in favor of Trinity on 6 August 1833 (*Bogardus v. The Rector, Church Wardens, and Vestrymen of Trinity Church in the City of New York*: 4 Paige 178). The case was appealed to the Court of Errors, which affirmed the Chancellor's decree in December 1835 (15 Wendell 111).

The plaintiffs, who now included Nathaniel Bogardus, Catharine Bogardus, Mary Bogardus, Cornelius Bogardus, Elizabeth Bogardus Sergeant and her husband Aaron Sergeant, James Bogardus, and Sarah McKenna, took issue upon the plea by filing a replication in 1845. In addition to the usual documentary evidence and affidavits, many witnesses were examined in open court during hearings that occupied 13 full days. These included elderly neighbors of Cornelius C. Bogardus, and others, who challenged Trinity's title to the property. This testimony is summarized in detail in the judge's ruling, which fills 129 pages.

On 23 June 1847, Vice-Chancellor Sandford issued his ruling in favor of

Trinity (4 Sandford Chancery 633), stating that the suit was absolutely barred by the statute of limitations. Occupancy of the land for twenty years or more establishes a valid title, regardless of the validity of the original deed. He stated that "a plainer case has never been presented to me as a judge. Were it not for the uncommon magnitude of the claim, the apparent sincerity and zeal of the counsel who supported it, and the fact . . . that the descendants of Anneke Jans at this day, are hundreds, if not thousands in number, I should not have deemed it necessary to deliver a written judgment on deciding the cause."

Not only did the Vice-Chancellor dismiss the suit, but he ordered Nathaniel Bogardus and the other plaintiffs to pay Trinity \$1,104.26 in costs because of their "unjust vexation." This assessment went unpaid for more than a year, so the Supreme Court (which assumed jurisdiction after the Court of Chancery was abolished in 1847), in an ironic twist, ordered the sheriff to seize the property of the heirs and deliver the proceeds to Trinity. The sheriff reported on 22 January 1849, that he was unable to comply because the Bogardus heirs possessed "no goods, chattels, lands, or tenements" in the city of New York (N.Y. Supreme Court Docket PL 1849 B-122). It appears that the money was never paid, in which case, with accumulated interest owed since 1 December 1847, perhaps the heirs now owe Trinity a fortune, rather than the converse!

In 1833 a separate suit was filed by Jonas Humbert (in right of his wife Petronella, a descendant of Willem Bogardus), together with Leonard Warner, John Colvill, Peter W. Teller, Tylee W. Lafetra, Elizabeth Parcels, and George Brower. They argued that the Bogardus farm was not included in the Trinity grant of 1705, and that Trinity had unlawfully and fraudulently seized possession, and requested that the court fix the boundaries between the two parties. As in the previous case, extensive testimony and affidavits were taken. Vice-Chancellor McCoun ruled in favor of Trinity in 1836, but with leave to amend. The case was appealed to the Chancellor, who ruled in favor of Trinity on 28 May 1838 (Humbert et al. v. Rector, etc., of Trinity Church: 7 Paige 195). The plaintiffs then appealed to the Court of Errors, which again ruled for Trinity in 1840, citing the statute of limitations (24 Wendell 587). A motion in 1846 to introduce further evidence was denied.

A related suit was filed in the Court of Chancery in 1831. Rem Remsen Teller, John Bogardus, and 125 other heirs, brought suit against Jonas Humbert, Charlotte Brower, and 15 other heirs. The defendants were alleged to have violated an agreement among the heirs promising contributions toward the suits, cooperation, and equitable distribution of the proceeds. The dispute was settled in 1832 (the precise outcome is unclear due to the deteriorated condition of the original records: Chancery Docket D-CH-21-T). It is of interest because it is the first indication that financial contributions were being solicited from a large number of claimed heirs on the basis of unrealistic expectations, a trend that unfortunately would come to dominate future cases.

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**THE "HEIRS OF ANNEKE JANS BOGARDUS"
VERSUS TRINITY CHURCH: A CHRONICLE OF
NEW YORK'S MOST PROLONGED LEGAL DISPUTE**

BY WILLIAM J. PARRY

(Continued from THE RECORD 125:73)

In 1852 a suit was filed by Christopher C. Kiersted (a descendant of Anneke Jans' daughter Sara Roelofs) in the New York Supreme Court. He sued both Trinity and the State of New York, seeking to compel the State to demand possession of the land. The court ruled in favor of Trinity (Kiersted v. People of the State of New York: 1 Abb. Prac. Rep. 385). Despite this ruling, the legislature authorized the Attorney General to bring suit against Trinity to enforce any claims of the State. In 1856 the State sued Trinity to recover a lot on Murray Street, on the grounds that the 1705 grant was invalid, so the King's Farm had remained government property. The Supreme Court ruled for Trinity in 1859, as did the Court of Appeals in 1860, citing the statute of limitations (People v. Rector, etc., of Trinity Church: 30 Barb. 537; 22 N.Y. 44).

The next suit, by David Groesbeck in the New York Superior Court, was dismissed in 1870. He sued William E. Dunscomb and Morgan Dix, as representatives of the corporation, but neglected to name the Trinity corporation itself as a defendant. Groesbeck was represented by an attorney named Clinton Roosevelt, of whom we shall hear again.

Groesbeck, a Dutch Reformed clergyman and a claimed descendant of Anneke Jans, challenged Trinity's claim to the farm not only on the basis of a defective title, but also on theological grounds. He asserted, among other things, that the corporate trust had been diverted from its original purpose by reason of paying salaries for the preaching of "blasphemies," and that the wardens had failed to carry out their trust "for the suppression of immorality" by permitting portions of the property to be used for immoral purposes. As the judge saw fit to rule on these assertions and on a number of theological points that were raised by both parties (including the significance of the Synod of Dort), this case makes interesting reading.

On 20 December 1870, Judge McCunn ruled that the Trinity title was "most indisputable," and commented that "the plaintiff's notions as to his rights and remedies are wild, visionary, and absurd; and I think I will be doing an act of great kindness to him in dismissing the complaint altogether." (His opinion was published in full in *The New York Times*, 21 December 1870, pp. 2-3; also 41 Howard Prac. Rep. 302.) Groesbeck did not agree, and immediately brought the case before the New York Supreme Court, without results.

Taking a new approach, in October 1874 a group of heirs petitioned the Surrogate's Court of Albany County to grant letters of administration on the estate of Anneke Jans Bogardus, on the grounds that the original administration "was not attended with the care which is now enforced by statute." Surrogate

Judge Rogers refused the request, citing "want of jurisdiction." In July 1877, Rynear Van Giessen (a descendant of Anneke Jans' son Pieter Bogardus) again petitioned the Surrogate's Court to probate the will of Anneke Jans Bogardus and grant letters of administration. The court again refused, ruling that there was no estate left to be administered, a decision upheld by the New York Supreme Court in 1879 and by the Court of Appeals in 1883 (*Van Giessen v. Bridgford*: 18 Hun 80; 83 N.Y. 348). Yet another petition by Van Giessen, together with Elam Bradley and William Jenkins, in November 1882, was again refused by Surrogate Rogers.

The heirs were undaunted by these decisions, and continued to press their claims. Their efforts were fueled by false rumors that Anneke Jans was the daughter of Wolfert Webber, an illegitimate son of Prince William of Orange, and that her royal ancestors had left fortunes (with accumulated interest) in various European banks to be claimed by her seventh generation descendants. Several organizations, beginning with the "Anneke Jans Association" in 1867, were founded to promote the interests of the heirs. One of the most ambitious was formed in the 1870s by Emma H. Wallace of Chicago, who organized a joint stock company and sold shares (at \$10 each) to raise funds for a suit. She eventually brought a suit in the U.S. Circuit Court for the Southern District of New York (she elected to sue in Federal Court on the grounds that she was not a resident of New York). This suit was dismissed on 19 October 1885, for want of prosecution.

After Emma Wallace died in 1892, her lawyer, Eugene B. Travis, assumed leadership of her association. He continued to solicit funds from hundreds of claimed descendants, with the promise that the money would be used to publish a book which was "intended to contain some of the legal propositions involved that will be of service to your own family lawyer." As far as I know, this book never materialized.

In 1892, another "new tack" was taken. Clinton Roosevelt, an elderly lawyer who had been active on the case since his youth, filed papers with the New York Attorney General on behalf of the heirs, seeking title to 25% of the property by escheat (as abandoned property, reverting to the state). He did not succeed. His efforts were supported by the "Anneke Jans Bogardus Literary Association," whose 640 members each contributed \$50 for the cause. Other organizations of heirs and claimants were subsequently formed in Los Angeles, Chicago, and elsewhere. In 1896, "The Anneke Jans International Union" was incorporated in Cleveland, Ohio, by more than 300 heirs, 140 of whom paid one dollar each to purchase shares. Also in 1896 the "Union Association of Heirs of Harlem, Anneke Jans Bogardus, Edwards, and Webber Estates" was incorporated in New York City by John H. Fonda. (The "Webber estate" refers to the mythical bank accounts mentioned above, and the "Edwards estate" will be encountered subsequently. Both of these claims attracted many people who were not authentic descendants, but merely shared the same common surnames.)

Nebraska, Los Angeles, Seattle, and probably elsewhere. *The New York Times* estimated that the claimed heirs of Anneke Jans numbered half a million, and that they had been defrauded of more than one million dollars by swindlers who falsely represented that they had a chance to recover billions.

As a result of their activities, Willis T. Gridley and Gladys Wright were indicted for mail fraud on 2 March 1928, convicted in Detroit on 15 March 1929, and sentenced to 5 years in Leavenworth Prison. Gridley's book, *Trinity! Break Ye My Commandments?* was written after his conviction and published in 1930. It is a large and luxurious folio, but its self-serving contents are mostly devoted to justifying and defending his own actions, and protesting his conviction, rather than documenting the claims of the heirs who had financed the work. Gridley and Wright appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit (44 F. (2d) 716) and then to the U.S. Supreme Court, which upheld the convictions on 9 March 1931 (283 U.S. 827).

At about this time, yet another organization was formed, "The International Corporation of Bogardus, Cox, Edwards, Baker, and Springer Heirs." The president and treasurer of this corporation, McLain Catterlin, sold shares to 7,000 claimed heirs at \$50 each. As a result, he was indicted at Xenia, Ohio, on 12 January 1933, for violation of the Ohio Securities Act. Following his conviction, the organization was continued by his secretary, Leona Keller Cole, until her death in 1971. The voluminous archives of this corporation are now housed in the Michigan State Library at Lansing.

Although many of the Edwards heirs had joined the Union Association of Heirs and other combined organizations (as they were claiming the same property), some of the Edwards claimants proceeded independently. Their experiences closely paralleled those of the Bogardus heirs. The general counsel for the "Edwards Heirs Corporation," Joel F. Webb, shared the fate of Willis T. Gridley. He was convicted of mail fraud in Atlanta on 2 March 1928, and given a suspended sentence of three years. Despite such setbacks, the Edwards heirs were able to file a series of suits in both Federal and State courts. In January 1925, Arthur J. Edwards and Wesley J. Edwards brought suit in the U.S. District Court, without success.

The last suit in a New York State court was brought in 1930, when Robert Read, Gus Reddish, and six others sued Trinity in the New York Supreme Court. These plaintiffs claimed to be descendants of Thomas Edwards, who had allegedly owned the northern portion of the King's Farm (from Christopher to Charlton Streets). They further claimed that one Robert Edwards had leased this land to Trinity "about" 1777, which lease had expired about 1877. However, they could not produce a copy of this lease, or any other evidence (other than family tradition) to support their claims, and fell back on bizarre allegations of sinister conspiracies of government officials to conceal the evidence. Not surprisingly, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Trinity on 7 July 1931, as did the Appellate Division on 18 December 1931 (without issuing an opinion: *Read et al. v. Rector*, etc.: 234 App. Div. 840).

Several suits were commenced by the Union Association, but none reached a conclusion because they were so poorly prepared. A suit in the New York Supreme Court by John Webber and Allan Weaver was summarily dismissed in 1901, after it was revealed that their attorney, Samuel G. Mason, was not licensed to practice law, and in fact was under indictment in Pennsylvania. Mason was subsequently convicted and imprisoned for obtaining money from the heirs under false pretenses.

A suit by Henry V. Stone, represented by an attorney for the Union Association named Elmer E. Good, was closed 30 July 1909, as Stone had died before making any progress. Shortly after in 1909, John Fonda's wife, Mary A. Fonda, brought suit in the New York Supreme Court. This suit also made no progress, as Mary Fonda failed to file a reply to Trinity's defense. When the case finally came to trial on 31 March 1911, neither Mary Fonda nor Elmer Good appeared, and the case was dismissed.

Despite these failures, John H. Fonda continued to solicit funds for the cause, and as a result he and Elmer E. Good were arrested and charged with mail fraud in 1913. The indictment against Fonda was dismissed by the Federal District Court, as Judge Learned Hand sympathized with Fonda's advanced age and noted that he "had been prompted by an obsession from childhood . . . and not by any criminal motives." Good was acquitted by the jury on 13 November 1913, after the sympathetic judge observed that he saw nothing wrong with filing new suits against Trinity, since "the courts had frequently handed down decisions which no one could understand and which were frequently reversed." But the judge also said that he assumed Good "was an extremely incapable lawyer, or that he was engaged in a very deliberate fraud."

After John H. Fonda died on 15 February 1915, his attorney Willis T. Gridley assumed leadership of the Union Association, with the assistance of Gladys Wright. Gridley was accused of misconduct by the New York City Bar Association, for continuing to solicit funds from the heirs (up to \$25,000 from one individual) by representing that they had a chance to recover the property, when "he knew that there was no chance of success, and had no new information and was unable to advance any theory upon which probable success could be based, which had not already been advanced to and disposed of by the courts." He was convicted and disbarred from the practice of law on 26 October 1917 (Matter of Gridley: 179 App. Div. 621).

Gridley unwisely continued to pursue the cause, and in 1923 founded "The Order of the Advocates of Justice for the Descendants of Anneke Jans Bogardus," a national organization based in Grand Rapids, Michigan, whose avowed purpose was to influence public opinion by publishing a book presenting their case. He requested that each member pay him \$25 toward research and publication costs, another \$25 to reserve a copy of the book, and 50 cents per month in dues. It has been estimated that he recruited 75,000 members. A number of other heirs' organizations also existed around this time, in New York, New Jersey, Wilkes-Barre (Pa.), Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee,

The last ruling in the dispute was delivered on 21 October 1935, after a suit finally reached the United States Supreme Court. The Supreme Court let stand, without comment, the ruling of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit that Trinity rightly held the land and that the statute of limitations barred the suit (Edwin W. Edwards, David Brown, et al., v. The Rector, Church Wardens, and Vestrymen of Trinity Church in the City of New York: 77 F. (2d.) 884; 296 U.S. 628). This appears to be the final word on the question. All possible legal approaches have been exhausted, and there is no basis for any further action.

Unfortunately, there are still a few gullible descendants who have irrational hopes of a financial windfall, and other unscrupulous people who seek to take advantage of them. Edgar Van Olida reported in 1969 that he had "frequently been importuned by many lawyers (for a retainer) to reopen the case and perhaps share in the rightful redistribution of the billion-dollar property of Trinity Church corporation. Some of my brother and sister heirs . . . once figured out if successful our share would amount to less than a dollar each" (*Albany Times-Union*, 29 January 1969).

I am told that the New York County Clerk still occasionally receives inquiries from alleged heirs. Some of them have paid large sums of money to so-called genealogists, who falsely represented that a documented pedigree was all that they needed to tap the unclaimed wealth of the Anneke Jans Bogardus estate. Such fraudulent practices in the name of genealogy should be condemned in the strongest terms. Anneke Jans Bogardus has left her descendants some of her genes, her good reputation, and nothing more. They must be satisfied to share her fame, without expecting fortune in addition.

(Concluded)

SOURCES:

[None of the decisions prior to 1833 were published. Except for parchment rolls, the original court records from the 18th century were discarded in 1799. Much information was obtained from newspapers and other secondary sources.]

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"Anneke Jans Bogardus and Her Farm," by J. W. Gerard. *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, vol. 70 (1885), pp. 836-849. [excellent summary; includes an accurate map of the boundaries of the farm.]

Colonial New York: Philip Schuyler and His Family, by George W. Schuyler. New York, 1885. ["Anneke Jans:" vol. 2, pp. 337-362.]

Anneke Jans Bogardus: Her Farm, and How It Became the Property of Trinity Church, New York, by Stephen P. Nash. New York, 1896. ["prepared and printed for the use of the church," a partisan but detailed and accurate summary.]

"The Anneke Jans Fable." Appendices to *Trinity Church Yearbook and Register*, 1896, pp. 145-159, and 1902, pp. 188-192. [reprints articles from *The New York Tribune*, 8 Mar. 1896, *The Toledo Blade*, 4 Feb. 1896, and *The New York Herald*, 9 Feb. 1902.]

"Annetje Jans' Farm," by Ruth Putnam. *The Half-Moon Series: Papers on Historic New York*, vol. 1 (1897), no. 3, pp. 61-98. [biography of Anneke Jans Bogardus and the early history of the farm; the claims of the heirs are briefly dismissed.]

A History of the Parish of Trinity Church in the City of New York, by Morgan Dix (4 volumes). New York, 1898-1906. [information on the Anneke Jans claims is mostly taken from Stephen Nash, whose book is summarized in volume 2, pp. 293-310.]

The Iconography of Manhattan Island, 1498-1909, by I. N. Phelps Stokes (6 volumes). New York, 1915-1928 (reprinted by Arno Press, New York, 1967). ["Trinity's Lower Farm (The Bouwery of Anneke Jans):" volume 6, pp. 145-147, summarizes the history of the title; additional details in the "Chronology" sections.]

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Anneke Jans Bogardus and Her New Amsterdam Estate, Past and Present, by Thomas Bentley Wikoff. Indianapolis, 1924. [supports the claims of the heirs.]

Trinity! Break Ye My Commandments? by Willis Timothy Gridley. Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1930. [polemic by disbarred former lawyer for the heirs.]

"Century-Old Estate Swindle Believed Reviving in State," by Royce Howes. *Detroit Free Press*, 28 Jan. 1940, p. 7; with follow-up, 30 Jan. 1940. [Gridley trial and subsequent developments.]

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"The Anneke JANS BOGARDUS Story," by William Brower Bogardus. Pp. 1-4 of *Anneke JANS - BOGARDUS and Adam BROUWER Research Aid Bibliography*. The Anneke Jans and Everardus Bogardus Descendants Association, Wilmington, Ohio, 1989. [genealogical, biographical, and bibliographical data.]

"Estate Fraud and Spurious Pedigrees," by Helen Hinchliff. *Genealogical Journal*, vol. 19 (1991), pp. 22-46. [includes a brief summary of the Anneke Jans claim, and a detailed discussion of the "Edwards heirs."]

RECORDS OF THE FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF FLUSHING

TRANSCRIBED BY A. HIGBEE SAMMIS

(Continued from THE RECORD 125:95)

Marriages

1870

- Apr. 3 George Seaman and Phebe Washington both of Flushing, at Home by George Taylor, wit. Caroline Brooks, Mary Watson.
- 20 Wm. H. Christie and Emily L. West both of Flushing, at Mr. West's by George Taylor, wit. Augusta Lant, A. P. Demet.
- 7 William H. Palmer and Margaret English both of Flushing, at Church by George Taylor, wit. Thomas English, Margaret English.
- May 3 Henry Horn and Lorretto A. Tibbs both of Flushing, at Parsonage by George Taylor, wit. Emma A. Barnes, Mary J. Taylor.
- June 1 Gilbert Wright and Mary E. West both of Flushing, at Home by George Taylor, wit. Edgar Bowen, Henrietta West.
- July 31 Ruben Turner of N.Y. and Sarah Beggs of Newtown, at Parsonage by George Taylor, wit. Frank H. Griffen, Josephine Taylor.

1871

- Mar. 27 Richard P. Morle and Mary L. Macord both of Whitestone, at Whitestone by George Taylor, wit. Oliver A. Bailey, D. H. Read.
- June 28 Robert Orr and Josephine R. L. Travis both of Flushing, at Home by George Taylor, wit. Mrs. A. P. Donaldson, Henry Bowman.

ESTATE FRAUD AND SPURIOUS PEDIGREES

Helen Hinchliff, PhD*

From at least 1871 and probably as much as a century earlier; recurring at intervals approximately a generation apart; and likely to carry on to some degree *ad infinitum*, estate fraud has been perpetrated on hundreds of thousands of would-be "heirs" throughout the English-speaking world. Dozens of family names have been associated with one or more incredibly valuable, but nevertheless completely fictitious estates. In misguided efforts to qualify for a "rightful share" in an estate that would forever elude them, many hopeful "heirs" and more than a few deceitful ones have created fanciful forebears and false lines of descent.

Almost invariably the "estates" were associated with frequently-occurring family names; consequently, a mistakenly-identified or purposefully-manufactured ancestor could be lurking in the background of many an unsuspecting genealogist. This article does five things: (1) relates the origins of estate fraud; (2) describes how the basic fraud operated; (3) differentiates between two types of "heirs"; (4) shows how confidence artists invented "estates" using family names allied with those already associated with fabulous estates; and (5) argues that the creation of false lines of descent and forged documents were endemic among those seeking to prove their entitlement to millions of nonexistent dollars. Using the "Edwards Estate" as a case study, this article reports some unlikely places where basic documents were "found"; illustrates the ways in which "heirs" copied the ancestries of others and/or modified them to suit their own purposes; and provides a documented chronology in the alteration of the names, dates, and places of residence of ancestors in the author's line of descent.

1. Origins of Estate Fraud

Estate fraud in North America began with the **Bogardus Estate**, land once owned by Anneke Jans Bogardus in mid-seventeenth-century New Amsterdam. The object of litigation

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lasting, on and off, for more than two centuries, the Bogardus Estate was transformed, through the bad offices of a series of confidence men, from a possibly ingenuous claim on property once owned by an ancestor into a cruel and tediously recurring hoax on generations of innocent descendants. In the 1890s Stephen P. Nash, LL.D., was moved to research the history of the title to this "estate."¹

The Facts

In 1663 Anneke Jans Bogardus died in possession of land whose boundaries extended approximately along what is now Fulton Street from Broadway to the Hudson River, north to Christopher Street, to a point just east of Hudson Street, and then south and east back to Broadway near Duane Street, about 62 acres in what would become the heart of nineteenth-century New York City, now centered in its financial district. Her will directed that the farm be sold and the proceeds be divided principally among the children of her first husband, Roeloff Jansen. A son named Cornelius Bogardus died in 1666, but when the farm was sold in 1670 to Francis Lovelace, the Governor of New York, no representative of the deceased Cornelius Bogardus's infant heir signed the deed.²

In 1674, Governor Lovelace was heavily in debt to the Duke of York, who was subsequently crowned James II of England (and VII of Scotland, 1685–1689). Anneke's farm reverted to the Duke and thence to the British Crown, becoming known first as the King's Farm and later the Queen's Farm. In 1705 Queen Anne (1702–1714) granted it to Trinity Church. No record survives of any objection to these transactions. Indeed, it was not until 68 years after Anneke Jans Bogardus's death that any descendant claimed it.

The Claims

In 1738 Jacob Brower, a descendant of Anneke's son, William Bogardus, formally asserted a claim on the property; in 1743, he took forcible possession of it, only to be evicted. In 1748, Brower sought to wrest the farm from Trinity Church by legal means. Further legal recourse resulted in the case being tried before the Supreme Court of New York on 24 October 1760; Trinity Church successfully defended its title. The transcript does not survive, but a notice appeared in the *New York Mercury* three days later:

Last week a remarkable Tryal, which has been in the Law nearly 20 years, came on in the Supreme Court here, between *The Rector and Inhabitants of the City of New-York of the Church of England, as by Law established,*

and the family of the *Browers*, who sued for 62 acres of the King's Farm; when the jury, being out about 20 Minutes, gave their Verdict in favour of the *Defendants*.³

Subsequent efforts on behalf of Bogardus descendants to reclaim the property were made in 1807 by a Colonel Malcolm and again in 1830 by John Bogardus. The latter claim was finally decided in June 1847. The decision, in favor of Trinity Church, totalled 129 pages. The opinion of the court read in part:

. . . I feel bound to say, that a plainer case has never been presented to me as judge. Were it not for the uncommon magnitude of the claim, the apparent sincerity and zeal of the counsel who support it, and the fact . . . that the descendants of Anneke Jans, at this day, are hundreds, if not thousands, in number; I should not have deemed it necessary to deliver a written judgment on deciding the cause. . . . But the law on these claims is well settled; and it must be sustained. . . .⁴

The case may have been clear to the judge, but Bogardus descendants initiated a further unsuccessful claim in 1851; there was another in 1878, and at numerous times thereafter the papers carried news items of further pending litigation. Indeed, the continuing claims on this property became a joke among the legal profession and Maria Sabina (Bogardus) Gray rightly concluded that the "Bogardus Estate" was a veritable "Jarndyce v. Jarndyce."⁵ The "Estate" must have been well known to the general public in 1878 if readers of the *Indianapolis Journal* were to have derived a chuckle from this brief item:

An heir of Anneke Jans has been sent to the Poor House in Monroe County, New York.⁶

Various pretexts were used to bring new claims, but they always failed. In the words of Clifford P. Morehouse, ". . . it is safe to say that probably no property in Manhattan has been so thoroughly examined and so completely established as that granted in 1705 to Trinity Church under the name of Queen's Farm."⁷ Perhaps that is why in 1879 one group of heirs, ". . . agreed not to meddle with the Trinity Church Property at present, but to go for money that is deposited in the bank with the Government of Holland, which now amounts to \$83,000,000, drawing 4 percent interest."⁸

Stephen Nash ended his account of the Bogardus-Trinity Church litigation by asserting that "all later" claims (no specific date provided) constituted instances of fraud:

[They] have been brought in aid of schemes fraudulently set on foot to obtain contributions from the so-called heirs. From time to time fresh

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organizations are formed under the pretence that facts newly discovered make success certain in a threatened attack. Many are deluded into furnishing money to aid the promoters in these swindling operations.⁹

Thus, almost as an afterthought, Nash reported that the instigators of at least some of the efforts to claim a share of the "Bogardus Estate" were confidence men whose main goal was not to press a claim in court on behalf of "heirs," but to extract money for themselves from the supposed heirs. In this brief statement, he had the basic outline of what the swindle was all about.

2. Estate Fraud in Operation

Estate fraud operated on a scale of enormous proportion, possible to imagine only by gathering together reports from a variety of sources. Those described here are by no means all;¹⁰ they are merely those the author has encountered through systematic searches of (1) the index to *The New York Times*, from its inception in 1851¹¹ to 1989 and (2) the index to *Readers Guide to Periodicals*, from its beginning in 1890 until 1989. Numerous articles about estate fraud were uncovered by using topic headings such as *estates, inheritance, swindle, frauds, heirs, legal, wills, and Trinity Church*; other articles were discovered under the names of some of the more famous estates, such as *Baker, Bogardus, Drake, and Edwards*. Systematic searches of newspapers by known dates of "estate" activity in such cities as Sioux City, Chicago, Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, and Louisville uncovered additional material. Finally, a search of the Post Office Dockets for the Office of the Solicitor, Record Group 28, at the National Archives, yielded the transcripts of several estate fraud hearings.

Incredible as it should have seemed, dozens of "estates" had been denied to rightful heirs. Coincidentally, many were being sought simultaneously in the same cities; often Indianapolis served as headquarters. Sometimes, two different estates were reported in the same news item. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that many hopeful "heirs" were more than marginally aware of the others; otherwise, it seems doubtful that they would have been caught up in the scam so easily.

The Bait

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the swindle was well underway, confidence men sought heirs with a very wide sweep. They placed advertisements seeking missing

heirs in the personal or legal notices columns of newspapers. They planted articles in newspapers about huge estates that were soon to be awarded to their "rightful heirs." They published booklets advertising for "lost heirs" of thousands of "estates."

The Bite

Hundreds of thousands—if not millions—of people responded. They formed themselves into associations of estate claimants; they incorporated under the laws of their state; they wrote letters to their cousins encouraging them to join the association, to pay membership dues and special assessments, to search through their family papers for proof of their pedigrees and for documents that might help to recapture the estate, and to encourage other cousins to join the association; they held meetings and publicized them in their local newspapers. The wire services, hungry for news of "human interest" and not too concerned about its accuracy, picked up dozens of items about meetings of heirs in such isolated communities as Yellow Springs, Missouri, and North Vernon, Indiana, and these were reprinted in major metropolitan newspapers like *The New York Times*. The fact that meetings of heirs were being held everywhere lent credence to the idea that the estates really existed. To give some sense of the popularity of these associations, the author has identified Edwards Heirs associations incorporated in dozens of cities and states all over the United States and Canada; in addition, associations were incorporated in Australia and in England, Scotland, and Wales. Louisville, Kentucky, had two rival associations, The National Scotch Edwards Heirs and the Edwards Heirs Association of Louisville.

Hooked

With the onset of the Great Depression and rising unemployment, hundreds of thousands of financially desperate people were sinking precious dollars into schemes that they hoped would result in a financial windfall. A serious social problem was looming and governments began to take action. In 1931 then New York Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt warned his citizens:

Impostors are going through the whole nation persuading gullible persons that huge estates exist in New York which are now ready to be distributed to unknown heirs.

In the interest of fair play and in order to save innocent people from putting their money into so-called legal retainers, I am giving this warning. So far as our Tax Department and I know there are no large estates in the State of New York awaiting distribution to unknown heirs.²

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On the federal level the Office of the Solicitor of the Post Office Department held a series of hearings in the mid-1920s culminating in federal trials and conviction of several of the major operators. A lengthy hearing to investigate the **Mercer Heirs, Inc.** of New Richmond, Ohio, Trenton, N.J., and New York, N.Y., was held between 17 and 24 January 1930. It revealed that a couple named George S. and Lucy K. Walrath were simultaneously operating associations of **Mercer, Harper, and Edwards Heirs**. Mrs. Walrath was the "heir" and testified that the Harper and Mercer Estates were linked to the Edwards Estate by marriage.¹³ Apparently addicted to estates, Mrs. Walrath also reported having attended meetings of **Jans Heirs** and **Baker Heirs**; she admitted having heard that the Indianapolis Better Business Bureau had issued a statement that these estates and others named **Drake, Fisher, Kohler, and Springer** were frauds; nevertheless, she reported her conviction that "there *is* a Spring [*sic*] estate and a Drake estate and a Kohler estate."¹⁴ Her knowledge was based not only on newspaper articles, but also on having been shown a copy of a 99-year lease by a Toronto man named Hill. She was invited to join his organization on payment of \$25 against a "guaranteed \$1 million," but she subsequently learned that he represented **The Baker Association**.¹⁵

3. The Heirs and Their Associations

Once the idea of creating an association of heirs had been planted in a community, it did not take long before there were two kinds of people participating in them: the swindlers and the suckers.

Swindlers

Association members who are easily documented, because they took a leading role in efforts to reclaim the estates, were ones that should have known better. Doctors, lawyers, judges, ministers, and former governors were almost always prominent among the leaders of the hundreds of organizations of heirs that were formed to reclaim estates. Perhaps some of them were merely lending an impressive title; others were clearly operators. A few examples over the decades will illustrate them:

In 1879, over 700 heirs to the **Springer Estate**, 800 acres in the heart of Wilmington, Delaware, said to have been worth \$80,000,000, were led by the Reverend J. W. Springer of St. Louis, the Honorable William M. Springer, of Washington D.C., and Congressman Springer, of Illinois, among others.¹⁶

Also in 1879, The Hyde Association, seeking the **Hyde Estate**, said to have been valued at \$360,000,000 in Chancery, was represented by former New Mexico governor Arny, former New Jersey governor Bedle, Judge J. L. Jones of Flemington, N.J., former Judge Holcombe of Lambertville, N.J., and Dr. Shepherd, "a prominent Sussex County politician," among others.¹⁷

In 1936 among 28 persons indicted for fraud by a Federal Grand Jury in the **Baker Estate**, land in the heart of Philadelphia, then said to have been worth as much as \$3,000,000,000, were a public accountant and a minister from Johnstown, Pa.¹⁸

Suckers

Most of those who joined associations of "heirs" or who contributed to them were poor farmers, small town folk, and others vulnerable to the lure of a "get-rich-quick" scheme. They were naive enough to believe the unbelievable, particularly if they saw it in print; they were greedy enough to expect to receive something for nothing; and they were loyal enough to their associations and their swindler leaders to carry on even as the latter were found guilty of fraudulent use of the mails and sentenced to federal penitentiaries. As the generations went by, older suckers were augmented by younger ones who had always heard that their family had a "tradition" of an estate in their background.

Suckers Turned Swindlers

Perhaps some of those whose names frequently appeared in the papers as leaders of various associations of claimants were actually suckers from beginning to end, but it probably did not take long for the more discerning of them to realize that there was more money to be made from other suckers than from the "estates" themselves. Initial membership fees in heirs' associations usually started at \$10; monthly dues were \$1.00. These could add up quickly if vast numbers of "heirs" were encouraged to join. But special assessments for "legal fees" and travel could be made from time to time and some heirs were willing to contribute several hundred or even several thousand dollars against an anticipated windfall of as much as \$1,000,000, as their share of the entire estate. More than a few suckers succumbed to the temptation to transform themselves into small-time swindlers.

Drake. Oscar Merrill Hartzell became a big-time swindler, operating primarily in Iowa. Found guilty in 1933 in Sioux City, Iowa, on 12 counts of using the mails to defraud between ten and fifteen thousand individuals of over \$1 million during the 1920s

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episode of the **Drake Estate**, Hartzell was sentenced to ten years in Fort Leavenworth.¹⁹ Despite the verdict, thousands of suckers still believed in the Drake Estate and Hartzell continued the swindle from his prison cell using lieutenants who raised an additional \$270,000 between 1933 and 1935. In 1935 Hartzell and 41 co-defendants were charged in Chicago with defrauding over 70,000 "donators" to the Drake Estate; he and seven co-defendants were found guilty; 33 co-defendants convinced the prosecutors that they were merely well-meaning suckers and charges against them were dropped.²⁰

The former Missouri farmer had once been a sucker himself, who had earlier invested \$6000 of his mother's money in the Drake Estate. In 1922 he went to England with two others to check the progress of the claim;²¹ it was then that Hartzell decided to become a swindler. In his opening statement to the Chicago jury US Attorney Austin Hall asserted that "Hartzell separated from the others and made it known in this country that he himself had found a direct lineal descendant of Drake."²²

For the next ten years Hartzell operated the Drake Estate from London, England, claiming that (1) he had "gained an assignment of rights to it" from the descendant, whose identity he steadfastly refused to reveal, but (2) he was willing to sell shares in that assignment to anyone willing to invest in it. In this twist, Hartzell no longer had to concern himself or his suckers with the difficult and time-consuming process of proving pedigrees; anyone, not merely "heirs," could expect a windfall by investing in the eventual distribution of several billion dollars. Federal attorneys estimated that Hartzell's windfall amounted to \$1.35 million, primarily from "donators" who lived in the midwest.

Baker. Colonel Jacob Baker, so one story alleged, moved to Canada after heroically serving in the American Revolution; in 1801, he died intestate and without issue in the residence of one of his brothers. It came to light subsequently that the colonel had owned 1500 acres in the center of Philadelphia, which, in 1878, was valued at \$315,000,000. Advertisements for heirs had been placed in a number of papers and associations were being formed. One of them attracted 57 people in the town of Brookville, Ohio.²³

Another Baker story had it that two unmarried brothers of the colonel, all three of whom served in the American Revolution, died intestate leaving the colonel a large part of Philadelphia, 11 acres along the Hudson River, and coal fields in Pennsylvania. The coal mining property had been on lease for 99 years and was soon to expire. The property was worth \$200,000,000, and the

heirs were the descendants of Colonel Jacob Baker's two daughters, Betsy and Hannah, most of whom were said to be living in upstate New York and in Canada.²⁴

In 1936, they still had not got it right. By then the story was that Colonel Jacob Baker, a Revolutionary War Hero, had died in Philadelphia in 1839, leaving a will. The US Justice Department was prosecuting a series of instigators of that round of the Baker Estate fraud. Among other things, it showed that Baker's alleged will had been written and dated on paper that could not have been made before 1886. Further, and somewhat gratuitously, the prosecution pointed out that while there had been three Jacob Bakers in the Continental Army, none had served with distinction and in fact all three had a record of desertion. Finally, and a more telling point, their estates had all been settled satisfactorily.²⁵

An article in *The Literary Digest* summed up the Government's case against the swindlers it had identified in Pittsburgh:

Government officials charged that more than \$3,000,000 had been collected from 3,000 persons [in Pittsburgh and that] upward of 10,000 persons were cheated of almost \$15,000,000 by some twenty-six "Baker Estate" organizations now operating throughout the country. Authorities further believe it is possible that in the seventy years the "Baker Estate" groups have been operating, both in Canada and this country, 500,000 persons have contributed \$25,000,000 to alleged promoters. . . .

. . . Post Office Inspector Alfred T. Hawksworth, . . . was a principal figure in rounding up the case. "It is the biggest mail fraud case I believe the Department ever encountered, involving both in numbers of persons and money more than three times the celebrated Sir Francis Drake case of a year ago."²⁶

Ten individuals went on trial for fraudulent use of the mails in promoting the Baker Estate. A major part of their defense was that they had "acted in good faith and really believed in the existence of the estate left by Baker. . . . Each of the defendants [*sic*] had heard of the Baker estate from his parents, grandparents and great grandparents."²⁷

4. An Estate Here; An Estate There

Fraudulent estates had several patterns in common. First, there was an enormous parcel of land that had been let on a 99-year lease, a fact that would have been forgotten by three or four generations of "heirs"; the lease had recently expired, and it was now possible to distribute the property to the descendants. A variant pattern held that there was an immense sum of money deposited in a foreign bank awaiting heirs of someone who had died intestate; often both land and money awaited the hopeful

heirs. Second, it was assumed that all improvements on that once-virgin land would accrue to the "heirs" and that the bank deposits had been compounding interest for hundreds of years. Third, the current occupant(s) of the land, usually a formidable corporate entity with deep financial pockets, was said to have taken great pains to disguise the fact that its "lease" had expired; or, it had forged documents to demonstrate its supposed legal possession of the property; or, it had conspired to remove from appropriate legal custody the very documents that would have proved that the heirs had owned the property all along. Further, fearing financial ruin, foreign banks and governments often conspired to delay release of the funds.

The facts alleged in the various estates duplicated each other so precisely that it is obvious that several of the estates were actually the same property or bank deposits. In some cases the same masterminding swindler was operating several "estates" simultaneously. Most interesting for genealogists is the process by which allied family names were used to create new "estates." This is seen most obviously in the Bogardus case.

Webber. The name of Anneke Jans Bogardus's father has been reported as not yet proven, but he may have been Wolfert Webber.²⁸ In 1878 this possibility led to pursuit by 40 or 50 New York City "descendants" of Wolfert Webber of a **Webber Estate**, said to have been located about twenty miles from Amsterdam.²⁹

Wyckoff-Jans. In late 1922 or early 1923 a *Los Angeles Herald* news item reported the existence of "... the world's greatest estate, the **Peter Wyckoff-Anneke Jans** properties, lying in the heart of New York City's financial district, and estimated in value at \$850,000,000." Thomas Bentley Wikoff asserted that Peter Wyckoff, a native of Holland, had been granted the land in recognition for services.³⁰ Sucker-turned-swindler Lucy K. Walrath, in her testimony on her operation of the **Mercer, Harper, and Edwards Heirs**, identified T. B. Wykoff as the Indianapolis man who operated the **Bogardus Estate**; she also detailed the help he had given her in 1922 to organize associations of Edwards Heirs.³¹

Edwards. Differing stories about the Edwards Estate will be presented in part 5, as part of a case study in how estate fraud can result in the creation of forged documents and false pedigrees; however, it should be reported briefly that the 62-acre parcel of land in New York City known as the **Bogardus Estate** was also the **Edwards Estate**.³²

Edwards-Hall. Yet another variant on the Bogardus Estate

held that land in New Amsterdam was granted to Thomas Hael, later Hall, whose daughter married a Thomas Edwards; supposedly, their son was named Robert Edwards. A swindler named Gerald Carr, who was simultaneously operating the **Edwards-Hall** and **Mercer Heirs** scams out of Indianapolis in the 1950s, estimated the value of the Trinity Church land at \$6,000,000,000,000. Reportedly, he was sent to the federal penitentiary in Texarkana, Arkansas, in 1959.³³

Van Horn et al. In a lengthy article titled "Claiming Many Millions, The Van Horn Family's Hopes—mixed up with Anneke Jans," *The New York Times* reported that the Van Horns were asserting that (1) their ancestors had once owned land near Anneke's; (2) they had leased it for 99 years; and (3) descendants had moved to Pennsylvania and had forgotten about it. Nevertheless, **Van Horn descendants** had intermarried with **Jans descendants**, who were now uniting to reclaim their mutual, combined inheritance. In addition, the Van Horns were claiming an additional 27,800 acres, said to have been worth \$250,000,000 in 1880. This land constituted much of the rest of Manhattan Island in New York City and was said to have been granted in 1686 to a **Lord Waldron** and four unnamed others. Some generations later, this land was supposedly willed to persons surnamed, **VanFelt**, **Hugnamon**, **Woolsey**, **Carson**, **Johnson**, **McAllister**, and **Townsend**. The Van Horn organizers reported that they had consulted the New Jersey attorneys associated with the **Hyde Estate**, who were said to be representing Van Horn interests on a contingency basis of three percent of the ultimate settlement of the estate.³⁴

5. Forgery and Falsification

Any given local group of "heirs" could be taken in for only so long—about three or four years—before they lost interest and gave up. As gullible as the suckers may have been, many of them would ultimately conclude that they were up against a corporate and/or governmental conspiracy to deny them their rightful share of their ancestor's estate. Their leaders' efforts to win it back on their behalf had failed, they were told, for lack of suitable documents. This was certainly the problem when no record of a 99-year lease could be found in the first major, documentable round of the Edwards Estate fraud that occurred in the 1870s. By 1878, so many Edwards Heir associations were littering the landscape of North America—particularly in Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, and Virginia—that an enterprising *New York Times*

reporter undertook an investigation:

The records of the Registrar's office have been consulted in order to ascertain if any such lease as the one mentioned had ever been executed to the "Crown of England" or anybody else. The searchers in the office smiled audibly when the case was stated to them, and remarked that the matter was an old one with them, they having been over it so many times that they were perfectly familiar with it in all its details. . . .

As to the lease of the property to the "Crown of England" no such document is or ever has been on record in the Register's [*sic*] Office, so far as can be ascertained at present. . . . It is the opinion of the searchers in the Register's office that somebody is trying "to raise the wind" by imposing on the credulity of people who suppose themselves to be the heirs of Robert Edwards.³⁵

Forged Documents

In the early 1890s wire service stories about the Edwards Estate and a newly-discovered, recently-expired lease found their way into the pages of *The New York Times*.³⁶ Then, on 29 April 1891 that paper published a brief article reporting that the Edwards Estate fraud "had blossomed out anew." Leases were busting out all over:

Robert Edwards, a Welshman, owned . . . Trinity Church property. In 1780 and thereafter he made ninety-nine year leases of this property to various persons which leases are and have been recently expiring. [The Edwards Estate is nothing more than] an indigenous example of the estates-in-chancery-in-England fraud.³⁷

The *Times* warning was in vain; the 1890s flurry of Edwards Estate fraud was well underway, and its various swindlers and suckers would stop at nothing to cash in. In 1891 a lease was "found" in Virginia,³⁸ and a family in Mississippi came forward claiming to have documents supporting the claim.³⁹ Dr. Eustathius Chancellor of St. Louis must have located another. New Orleans attorney Harry L. Edwards disputed its discovery vehemently:

My great-grandfather, who was a brother of Robert Edwards, moved from New York to Fairfax County, Va., in 1776. . . . I know the descent of all the Edwardses' connections in Virginia, and I know also as much, if not more, of Dr. Eustathius Chancellor than he does himself. He is not in it, and I have letters from his branch of the Edwards family admitting that they have no share in the inheritance.

I take to myself the credit of having unearthed from the English archives the lease between Robert Edwards and the British Crown, and it will not be long, I think, before I have the document in my possession. In the garret of an old Kentucky farmhouse, thrown with other odds and ends, lay for many years, the title deed to the New York property.⁴⁰

A few weeks later Harry Edwards was buttressing his claim to

the one true deed:

The ignorance of the Edwards of the true heirs is shown no better, I think, than by the fact than none of them know that the title deeds to the property have never left the country, . . . even now [they] are in the garret of a quaint little Kentucky farmhouse.⁴¹

In 1895 Mrs. W. T. Leachman, of Louisville, Kentucky, spun an incredible tale of a document found in England, which is retold here in brief:

Mr. Edwards, of South Carolina, . . . was a direct descendant of Robert Edwards. [He] was looking through an old trunk belonging to his grandfather . . . and found a number of valuable documents which told among other things . . . [that the lease] was in one of the English courts. [Mr. Edwards] lost no time in gathering together money and going over to England. He made a thorough search and his zeal was rewarded by the discovery of the documents. . . . After he deposited the documents in one of the New York courts and went back to consult them he was startled to learn that they had been stolen. . . . The search for these papers extended over months, and the exposure Edwards was subjected to in hunting up the documents undoubtedly hastened his death. He found them, however, and deposited them in another court.⁴²

Mrs. Leachman claimed certain knowledge of the location of these documents and was making plans to go to "New York to look after her own claim and no other"; however, she was willing to file claims on behalf of other heirs, at \$100 each.

Documents continued to be unearthed well into the twentieth century: an undated and otherwise unidentified newspaper cutting sent to the author by a correspondent reported the discovery by William Edwards, of Greensburg, S.C., of "a certified copy of the original lease signed by Queen Victoria herself"; he found it in an old family Bible. In 1948 a will was found in "a secret crypt"⁴³; in 1949 Lowell Thomas reported the discovery of "new evidence about the Manhattan property."⁴⁴

Falsification of Pedigrees

The flurry of forged leases and deeds in the 1890s did not result in any great windfall to the heirs and during the last of the Edwardian period and throughout the First World War all was quiet on the estate front. It was not until the 1920s that estate fraud was to surge back like a mutated virus against which the "heirs" had no defenses. As children, they had attended the meetings; they had seen copies of leases; they had overheard their parents' discussions of anticipated riches; however, they had not developed an immune system. Lucy Walrath testified:

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All my life I have known of the Edwards Estate and that we were heirs. We were acknowledged in 1871, before I was born. Lawyers came to our home when I was a girl. . . . They said it was down around Wall Street.⁴⁵

Another said in a newspaper interview, as recently as 1981:

Mother used to say, "We may be hungry now, but someday we will be rich and we will never go hungry again." We waited and waited and it [the Edwards Estate] never happened. And, of course, now she's gone. . . . I know my mother. And one thing she would never do is lie.⁴⁶

As each new generation of suckers came on stream, they were thrilled to be part of yet another fight for their inheritance rights. They were delighted, too, to discover that an enormous amount of genealogical work on their ancestries had already been done in previous generations. To qualify for their share of the estate, there was little left to do but join their local heirs association and update the pedigree that demonstrated their link to the line of descent from the ancestor who had once owned the estate.

What the "heirs" did not know—and what modern-day genealogists *should* know—is that the estate fraud virus has insidiously infected thousands of pedigrees. Many, if not most, of those old lines of descent were first worked up by individuals who had no genealogical training whatever. In the case of the Edwards family those trying to qualify for the estate had to have a Robert Edwards in their ancestry. If they did not have such a name—and they wanted a share in the estate badly enough—they had to find one. Some copied other people's lines of descent as if they were their own. Others created a Robert Edwards out of whole cloth.

Copying

James Edwards, the immigrant ancestor in the author's line of descent, was thought to have been born in Aberdeen, Scotland. Indeed, all written accounts of this ancestor, shared with her by distant cousins, have agreed on this point. Inexplicably, they have also agreed that either his father or his grandfather had been Welsh but had "decided" to go live in Aberdeen. As a result of a good bit of searching into various Edwards pedigrees, it is obvious that the only decision that was made was to copy someone else's ancestry. A careful reading of the three accounts given below also allows the conclusion that the copying was creative and the pedigree of the Welsh ancestors gradually changed.

In 1894 Georgie Hortense Edwards published some historical sketches of her Edwards ancestry, the early accounts of which were republished in *The Edwards Journal*.⁴⁷ Citing no sources,

Georgie Edwards began her account thus:

Richard Edwards, the father of William and great grandfather of Hayden, was born in Somersetshire in 1523. He was a musician and writer of interludes; studied at Corpus Christi College, Oxford; took his Master of Arts degree in 1547, entered at Lincoln's Inn, and was appointed in 1561, a gentleman of the royal chapel and master of the singing boys. He died in the year 1566 at "The Edwards Hall," situated near Cardiff, in Glemorganshire [sic], Wales, . . . This hall . . . was abandoned about the year 1620, when the brothers, John, Thomas, Robert, and William, sons of William and grandsons of Richard Edwards, came to America to settle the land granted them for service rendered to the King.⁴⁸

Bruce Montgomery Edwards, referring to "our family papers" whose provenance he did not know, claims descent from this same Richard Edwards. Edwards did not cite any particular source, but stated that ". . . we have accepted [them] for just what they are—unverified family records—but which [our family] believed to be true and handed down for generations." His story sounds suspiciously like that of Georgie Hortense Edwards. Bruce Edwards begins his family account thus:

Richard Edwards, with whom our family records begin, was a cultured, apparently wealthy man. Born in Somersetshire in 1523, he received his higher education at Oxford, in the Cartus [sic] Christi College. He was both a musician and composer. . . . He died in 1567, not an old man by any means, at Edwards Hall near Cardiff.

He had a son, Richard, Jr. who had two sons—William and Joshua. William (1) had a son William (2), who had four sons—John, Thomas, Robert and William (3) All four of these sons appear to have come to Virginia in the early 1700s, though not at the same time, and are ancestors of the early Virginia Edwards families.

Joshua remained in Wales and was made a Baron in 1664. His son William (4) was born in 1620, according to the records. They also relate that William's son Thomas was born in 1690, a son of his old age. It would appear that another generation should have been included here but such is not the written record.

This Thomas, the great-great grandson of Richard was our direct ancestor. . . . Thomas Edwards was born 14 October 1690, presumably in Edwards Hall for he inherited the title of Baron from his grandfather. He was married in 1714 to Elizabeth Downing and they had seven sons and one daughter:

Robert Edwards	born 1716
Joshua	1718
William	1720
Thomas	1723
Leonard	1725
John	1727
Jacob	1729
Martha	1731

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Robert, John, and Jacob came to America about 1750. We do not know just when, on what ship, or if they came together. . . . The record of Robert is much in dispute. The family claimed that he was the founder of the "Edwards Fortune" in New York, . . .⁴⁹

An account written in the 1970s by Glenn Woods, a distant cousin of the author, picks up some of this material but condenses the generations. In his paper titled "Edwards Genealogy," Woods's account begins thus:

Richard Edwards lived on the England/Wales border in the middle part of the 17th century. He and his wife (whose name is unknown) were the parents of eight children: seven sons and one daughter. Of the lone daughter nothing is known beyond the fact that her baptismal name was **Martha**. The sons were **Leonard**, **Joshue** [*sic*], **Thomas**, **John**, **William**, **Jacob**, and **Robert Alexander**. That youngest son, Robert Alexander Sr., occupation not determined, decided when reaching manhood that he preferred to live in Scotland, while three of his brothers remained in Wales and three in England. In or about 1690, Robert Alexander Edwards, Sr. married in Aberdeen, Scotland, to Eleanor Laws, . . . They became the parents of two sons: James William Edwards born in 1702 and Robert Alexander Edwards, Jr., born in 1706. Robert Alexander Jr. never married, was [a privateer to whom Queen Anne Stuart gave] title to lands in the infant New York City.⁵⁰ [Emphasis supplied.]

All family group sheets sent to the author by distant cousins throughout the United States report, without citation of any source, that James Edwards, though born in Aberdeen, had a Welsh father.

Readers might think that creative copying was limited to the "heirs" among the author's distant cousins; apparently, it was pandemic. Bette Dickson Casteel has done extensive searches into many Edwards lines. Her conclusion: "Too many subscribers to the *Edwards Heirs Magazine*, published in the late 1920s by the Edwards Heirs Association, submitted genealogies claiming unsubstantiated early ancestors copied from lists of so-called brothers." Citing material in *Edwards Heirs*, she spotted yet another Edwards reporting the family constellation of Robert, William, Joshua, Jacob, Leonard, John, Thomas, and Martha; however, they were reported to have been the children of Jacob Edwards and Phoebe Crawford. Of these, she remarked, "These unsubstantiated lists of the same names shown above are still being circulated today. . . ." It was Casteel's hope to "clarify the utter confusion."⁵¹ When Mabel Scruggs Sommerfeld was researching her Edwards ancestor, she was appalled by the "ridiculous and blatantly fraudulent" lines of descent that she concluded had been copied from *Edwards Heirs Magazine*.⁵²

Creation

Robert Alexander Edwards, Jr. and—a fictitious father named Robert Alexander Edwards, Sr.—were created in 1878. Several generations of descendants have considered them ancestors and all family group sheets shared with the author have reported their mutual ancestor, James Edwards, as the only brother and heir of the unmarried and childless Robert Alexander Jr. The “existence” of these Robert Alexanders presented an obstacle in identifying the family accurately. Nevertheless, by using primary records, it has been possible to identify James Edwards’s Scottish family of origin correctly. Briefly, Robert Alexander Jr. was really named **Alexander** and his father was really named **William**. The mother of James and Alexander was **Helen Law**.

Dreams of untold riches resulting from tales of the “Edwards Estate” led at least two descendants of James Edwards to devote the summer of 1878 to their pedigrees and to write letters to some of their older relatives requesting detailed information on their ancestry. Their goal was to prove that the Robert Edwards who had owned the estate was the brother of their great grandfather, James¹ Edwards. Fortunately, the letters written in response to these queries survive in the manuscript collection of The Filson Club in Louisville, Kentucky.

The earliest surviving version of the Edwards tradition asserting that the brother of James Edwards was named *Robert* is that of S. W. D.⁴ Stone, (—³ Edwards Stone, William² Edwards, James¹), who finished his “Traditional History of the Edwards Family” on 1 July 1878,⁵³ in good time for a forthcoming “Edwards Estate” meeting to be held later that summer in Indianapolis. Unfortunately, page 1 of his account is missing, so his story picks up at this tantalizing point at the top of page 2:

It then turned out that he, Robert, had not been in the East Indies but had been a seafaring man in American waters and perhaps had been in the British Navy.

Before he, Robert, had time to tell fully where he had been and what he had been doing all this time of absence, . . . he took suddenly very sick and died before the morning . . . his brother James supporting him in his arms when he died. Among the little he had time to tell his mother and brother, was that he . . . had been a seafaring man in America; had been in and about Manhattan Island and had accumulated property there, . . .

Stone sent a copy of his account to his brother, J[ames] E[dwards] Stone (hereafter, J. E. Stone), who replied on 24 July 1878 in an unsigned letter from Hawesville, Kentucky, addressed “Dear Bro.” In it he reported that he had written John³ West,

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(Eleanor² Edwards West), the eldest daughter of James¹ Edwards. John was their oldest living relative, who reported that he was almost 82. J. E. Stone had wanted the older man's knowledge of the family history, including details about the Edwards Estate and his granduncle Robert. West "hastened to reply" to him on 10 July 1878, writing from Decatur, Ohio:

He [my grandfather] had a brother, whose name I think was, Robert, who followed privateering on the high seas. He wrote to my grandfather to meet him at his mother's in Aberdeen, Scotland; that he had enough of wealth for both, which he would share with him. Grandfather went by appointment, met him, but he had lost his fortune; supposed to have met a stronger privateer than he, so far as I know. . . . As to the estate that you mention, I never before heard anything about it.

John West had made an error in this account and soon corrected it. On 25 July 1878, he wrote again to J. E. Stone getting right to the point:

After my best respects to yourself and wife, I wish to rectify a mistake which I made in writing my other letter to you. I have been talking with two of Uncle George Edwards' boys since I wrote. They say that Grandfather Edwards' brother was named Alexander, which I think, myself, is true.

John West's memories and correction must have dashed temporarily the Stone brothers' hopes for an inheritance: (1) their older cousin had never heard of the "Edwards Estate" in New York; (2) the money that their great granduncle may once have had was lost; and (3) this great granduncle had been named *Alexander* and not *Robert*. In his letter to his brother, J. E. Stone reported that West had made a correction, but he did not sound convinced:

Since writing the above I rec'd a letter from Coz Jno West Sr. correcting as he called a mistake &. [sic]

On 3 August, Orange³ Edwards (George², James¹) took it upon himself to write to S. W. D. Stone to provide "a brief historical sketch of our family." At age 58 he was the youngest grandson of James Edwards and one of the "boys" John West had mentioned. He wrote:

James Edwards, my grandfather, was born in Aberdeen in Scotland in 1704⁵⁴ and had one brother ~~Robert~~ Alexander Edwards. . . . Alexander was a sea captain and was often in New York, and if he purchased property he had it made in his father's name.

Orange had started to write *Robert*, but he had struck it out

and written *Alexander*. He knew this would not help; after all, if James's brother was not *Robert*, there was no hope for a claim. Perhaps he reasoned that there must have been some earlier person in the family named *Robert*, so he suggested that James's and Alexander's father had borne that name.

Orange Edwards believed in the Edwards Estate. In the 3 August letter he mentioned that he had "... been watching the meetings with great anxiety" and in a number of additional letters his agitation about it grew intense. Orange also reported that several years earlier he had sent his son William Hayden Edwards to New York to investigate it. His son was an attorney and evidently a bright fellow; by 1878 he was Consul General in St. Petersburg, Russia. He told his father that there was no Edwards Estate and Orange reported that "... upon examination of the records [my son] was doubtful about the matter."

Orange Edwards may have believed in the "Edwards Estate," but he slipped up from time to time. On 13 September 1878, he wrote that "... grandfather did not claim his brother Alexander's property, ..." On 30 September he spoke once again of "... Alex. or Robt. ..."

In the early 1890s the "Edwards Estate" was once again in the news and a new crop of Edwards Heirs was gathering genealogical information. J. H. Rains wrote to Orange Edwards. By this time, Orange had given up the dream of a New York Edwards Estate, but he still believed in a Scottish one. In his 30 January 1891 letter to J. H. Rains, he wrote only of *Alexander Edwards*; however, having no evidence to the contrary, he had accepted his own suggestion that his great grandfather had been named *Robert*:

I have two sons that are lawyers and we have traced the N.Y. herasy [*sic*] until I am perfectly satisfied that it is all a sham. . . . I think there was a large fortune left to James Edwards by his brother Alexander Edwards. Robert Edwards had two sons and died young and James the elder came to Virginia when quite a boy and left all to Alexander. . . and . . . Alexander wrote to James to come to Aberdeen and he would divide the property and in the meantime Alexander was a batchelor [*sic*] and a Sea Captain. . . .⁵⁵

Once again, the older generation had created a problem for the young "heirs," so, on 20 February 1891, J. H. Rains, John Troutman, and H. M. King visited Orange Edwards. J. H. Rains made notes of that interview reporting that Orange Edwards had said "... the other son was a Sea Captain. The supposition is that his name was Robert Alexander Edwards and that he died a batchelor [*sic*]."⁵⁶ Once again, the desire for the "Estate" took precedence over accuracy in reporting genealogical fact.

Estate Fraud and Spurious Pedigrees

When the last of James Edwards's grandchildren had died, there was no one left to perpetuate his brother's name as *Alexander*. Consequently, it was changed to *Robert Alexander* or merely *Robert*, as numerous continuing efforts to claim the estate can attest. Dozens of versions of the tradition and all kinds of family group sheets and pedigree charts repeat the error.

For the record: Alexander Edward was baptized 25 November 1731, the son of William Edward and Helen Lai [sic] in the parish of Midmar, Aberdeenshire.⁵⁷ Further, as is fully documented elsewhere,⁵⁸ James Edwards, aged 13, arrived in 1740 at or near Occoquan, then in Prince William County (since 1742, Fairfax County), Virginia, aboard the *Indian Queen*. He was sold as an indentured servant to James Keith, the Truro Parish minister. James Edwards never lived in New York.

The Edwards family is not unique. Almost certainly the traditional histories of other families exposed even tangentially to estate fraud will in some past generation contain similarly erroneous names, dates or places. Genealogists who link into undocumented lines of descent discovered in books, data bases, or family group sheets filled in by distant cousins are well-advised **never** to accept the information proffered without thoroughly checking its accuracy in primary sources. The legacies of estate fraud lie not only in money lost to swindlers, but—more importantly for genealogists—they are also found in fallacious pedigrees not worth the paper on which they are printed.

APPENDIX

[Editor's Note: The following document relating to the Bogardus Estate fraud is in the possession of George K. Nichols, 62 Sand Creek Drive, Decatur, Illinois 62521, a descendant of Amzi (Amasa) D. Corby. Mr. Nichols notes that his ancestor lost his own land in a series of legal judgments in 1870 and 1871, and from the evidence, he could ill afford the \$100 required to participate in this estate scheme. The alleged connection of Amzi (Amasa) D. Corby to Anneke Jans Bogardus was through an invented great-granddaughter.⁵⁹ Mr. Nichols further states that "My father, now age 92, still believes the story, never mind the facts that I have uncovered. In 1924 Dad took his Mother, Emma (Corby) Nichols to a meeting at Roat Hardware, Kingston, Pa. where Willis Timothy Gridley, a lawyer from Grand Rapids, Mich., who had been disbarred for using the mails to defraud, in this matter, was still asking for money to fight Trinity Church."]

Bond.

Know All Men, by these presents, that we, **WILLIAM JENKINS**, of Newark, and **CHARLES QUIMBY**, of Orange, both of Essex County, and State of New Jersey, are held and firmly bound unto Amzi D. Corby in the sum of **TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS**, lawful money of the United States of America, to be paid to the said Amzi D. Corby or to his certain attorney, executors, or administrators, firmly by these presents. Sealed with our seals, and dated the Twenty fourth day of August in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-six (1866.)

The condition of this obligation is such, that [the above]-bounden **WILLIAM JENKINS** and **CHARLES QUIMBY**, or their heirs, executors and adm[inistrators or] any of them, shall and do well and truly cause to be paid unto to the above mention[ed] Amzi D. Corby or to his certain attorney, executors or administrators, the just and full proportion, share, or part of any lands, houses, money, goods or chattels, *first deducting therefrom two and-a-half per cent.*, that the said Amzi D. Corby his heirs, executors or administrators, may be legally and justly entitled to, as one of the lineal descendants of Aniake [sic] Jants [sic] Bogardus, deceased, or through or by virtue of a *certain Quit-Claim Deed, or release*, executed to the said **WILLIAM JENKINS** and **CHARLES QUIMBY**, by the said Amzi D. Corby *bearing even date with these presents*, which they, the said **WILLIAM JENKINS** and **CHARLES QUIMBY**, their heirs, executors or administrators, may recover by suit, compromise or otherwise from the Rector, Church Wardens or Vestrymen of Trinity Church, in the City of New York, [torn] or delay, the [said obligation to] be void or else to remain in full force and virtue.

Sealed and delivered in the presence of

Wm Jenkins Jr [seal]

Wm Jenkins [seal]

Charles Quimby [seal]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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Box 97, Fulford Harbour, BC, Canada V0S 1C0. Dr. Hinchliff is a family historian who reconstructs the lives of genealogically-challenging eighteenth-century ancestors. Her current interest is in Helen Law, of Aberdeen, Scotland. She is writing two books (1) explaining how to solve a variety of genealogical problems using Helen Law's family as a case study and (2) an in-depth investigation of estate fraud. Her degrees are in political science and communications.

She is an eighth-generation descendant of James Edwards through his eldest daughter Eleanor, the wife of John West. Helen's great grandfather was ElCharles Arthur¹ DeVore. His line of descent is as follows: Hester West⁴ DeVore, William³ West, Eleanor Edwards² West, James¹ Edwards, elder brother of Alexander Edwards.

She wishes especially to thank James J. Holmberg, Curator of Manuscripts, The Filson Club, Louisville, Ky., for his permission to quote from the Bush-Beauchamp Family Papers; J. Richard Abell, Genealogical Librarian at the Cincinnati Public Library, for his assistance in ascertaining the location of these papers. The help of many descendants of the Edwards family could be acknowledged. Those especially helpful were: Mary Sue Edwards, Franklin, Oh., who first informed the author of the existence of the Edwards Estate; Norma Rains, Maysville, Ky., for graciously making available old letters and other papers from her collection of family papers related to the Edwards Estate; Wendell Rickey, Winchester, Oh., who drew attention to the article reporting the 1950s Edwards Estate episode; and Dorothy Potter, Nashville, Tenn., who provided copies of the *Edwards Journal*.

[Editor's Note: This article expands upon a lecture, "Heir Today, Gone Tomorrow: How Estate Fraud Can Distort Your Pedigree," first given at the National Genealogical Society Conference in the States in Jacksonville, Florida, 30 April 1992.]

1. For this discussion the writer is dependent on secondary sources. Foremost in importance is a legal summary of the litigation by Stephen P. Nash, LLD, "A History of the Title to King's Farm and The Litigation Thereon" (hereafter, "The King's Farm") which cites primary sources throughout. It appears as an appendix to volume II of Morgan Dix, comp., *A History of the Parish of Trinity Church in the City of New York* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1901), 293-310, and is based on Nash's longer monograph, *Anneke Jans Bogardus, Her Farm, and How it Became the Property of Trinity Church*, New York, New York, 1896.

Two articles provide a briefer and simpler version of the legal history of the Bogardus Estate and also discuss the genealogical issues. John Reynolds Totten, FGBS, "Anneke¹ Jans 1607-8?-1663) and Her Two Husbands, Roelof¹ Jans (or Jansen) and Rev. (Domine) Everardus¹ Bogardus and Their Descendants to the Third Generation Inclusive," *The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record* 56 (July 1925): 205; Maria Sabina (Bogardus) Gray, *A Genealogical History of the Ancestors and Descendants of General Robert Bogardus* (Boston: privately printed, 1927), 65-66.

2. It should be reported here that this deed was not discovered until 1785;

although this writer has seen no argument advanced that the deed was spurious, she believes it possible in light of the many other spurious documents that were subsequently created in misguided efforts to qualify for an estate. This subject will be treated extensively in the author's forthcoming book on estate fraud.

3. Nash, "The King's Farm," 303.
4. Quoted by Nash, "The King's Farm," 306. Readers interested in learning more about these suits might refer to H. Minot Pitman, AB, LLB, FASG, "Two Anneke Jans Law-Suits," *The American Genealogist* 24 (1948): 65.
5. Gray, "Ancestors and Descendants of General Robert Bogardus," 69. The reference is to the plot of Charles Dickens's novel, *Bleak House*, first published in 1853. Dickens's case of "Jarndyce v. Jarndyce" ground on in Chancery for over 800 pages.
6. *Indianapolis Journal*, 16 September 1878, p. 4, col. 4.
7. *Trinity: Mother of Churches, An Informal History of Trinity Parish in the City of New York* (New York: The Seabury Press), 32.
8. "The Anneke Jans Heirs," *The New York Times*, 26 July 1879, p. 2, col. 5.
9. Nash, "The King's Farm," 310.
10. After delivering a lecture titled "Heir Today, Gone Tomorrow: How Estate Fraud Can Distort Your Pedigree," at the National Genealogical Society Conference in the States, Jacksonville, Florida, on 30 April 1992, several members of the audience informed her of the following Estate Frauds about which she had been unaware: **Brandenburg, Emerick, Humphries, Meadows, Mosher, Snowden.**
11. *The New York Times* started reporting on the activities of various associations of heirs in 1878, so it is possible to trace a number of simultaneously-occurring frauds from that year.
12. "Governor Warns the Innocent Against Fake Estate Racket," *The New York Times*, 12 Nov. 1931, p. 27, col. 3.
13. Hearing on International Corporation of Mercer Heirs, etc., R.G. 28 68/234, 470.
14. *Ibid.*, 461-462.
15. *Ibid.*, 465.
16. "Claiming Large Estates, Christopher Springer's Descendants—Hyde Heirs' Prospects," *The New York Times*, 27 December 1879, p. 2, col. 5.
17. "Heirs to Hundreds of Millions, A Prospect that the Great Hyde Estate in England Will be Awarded to the American Heirs," *The New York Times*, 10 November 1879, p. 8, col. 2.
18. "'Heirs' Still Claiming Philadelphia, Credulous for 70 Years have Sunk Millions in 'Baker Estate'," *Literary Digest*, 26 December 1936, 3-4.
19. "Hartzell Trial to Open Today in U.S. Court," *The Sioux City Journal*, 23 October 1933, p. 1, col. 6; "Hartzell is Found Guilty," *Ibid.*, 16 November 1933, p. 11, cols. 1-3.
20. "Found 8 Guilty in Drake Fraud, Face U.S. Cells for \$1,300,000 Swindle Myth," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1 February 1936, p. 1, cols. 1-8.
21. "Dupes and Drake," *Time*, 2 December 1935, 13.
22. "Lawyers Tell Both Sides of Drake Swindle," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 20 November 1935, p. 9C, cols. 1-2.
23. "Wants a Big Slice of Philadelphia," *The New York Times*, 29 November 1878, p. 2, col. 4.

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24. "The Two Hundred Millions of Property that the Heirs are After," *The New York Times*, 22 July 1879, p. 3, col. 6.
25. "Baker's Will Forged Paper, Witness Says," *The Pittsburgh Press*, 6 June 1937, p. 11, col. 1; "Baker Estate Case Given to Federal Jury," *Ibid.*, 15 June, 1937, p. 23, col. 1.
26. "'Heirs' Still Claiming Philadelphia," 26 December 1936, 3-4.
27. "Baker Estate Case Given to Federal Jury," *The Pittsburgh Press*, 15 June, 1937, p. 23, col. 1.
28. Totten, "Annieke Jans and Her Two Husbands," *NYGBR*, 203.
29. "The Claimants of a Large Estate," *The New York Times*, 8 February 1878, p. 3, col. 3.
30. "Los Angeles Heirs Battle for \$850,000,000 New York Estate Shares," quoted in Thomas Bentley Wikoff, *Anneke Jans Bogardus and Her New Amsterdam Estate Past and Present, Romance of a Dutch Maiden and Its Present Day Sequel* (Indianapolis: privately printed, 1924), 30. [FHL #1015827 items 12, 13]
31. R.G. 28 68/234, 397-9.
32. An hypothesis regarding how the two estates became intertwined will be explored in the author's forthcoming book on estate fraud.
33. Rufus Jarman and James Phelan, "The Billion-Dollar Bamboozle," *True, the Man's Magazine*, December 1962, 47. Jarman and Phelan also mention estate frauds using the names DeWitt, Pendleton, and Buchanan, among others named elsewhere in this article.
34. *The New York Times*, 1 January 1880, p. 5, col. 6.
35. "Is It Raising the Wind? Virginians Claiming Property in New York," *The New York Times*, 22 July 1878, p. 8, col. 3.
36. "A Claim on Trinity Property," *The New York Times*, 11 December 1890, p. 3, col. 7; "Heirs to a Big Fortune," *Ibid.*, 28 April, 1891, p. 1, col. 4.
37. "Heirs and Their Credulity," *The New York Times*, 29 April 1891, p. 9, col. 2.
38. "The Edwards Estate, An Important Paper Discovered by the Alleged Virginia Heirs," *The New York Times*, 13 June 1891, p. 2, col. 4.
39. "Broadway is in No Danger Though Heirs of One Robert Edward [sic] Claim Part of It," *The New York Times*, 20 July 1891, p. 1, col. 5.
40. "A New Orleans Lawyer Tells How He Found a Title Deed," *The New York Times*, 30 August, 1891, p. 5, col. 4.
41. "The Many Edwards Heirs, All of Whom Are Looking for a Slice of New York," *The New York Times*, 6 September 1891, p. 1, col. 6.
42. "Edwards Estate," *The [Louisville] Courier-Journal*, 15 August 1895, p. 6, col. 3.
43. Warren Hall, "Invasions on the Dollar Beachhead," *The American Weekly*, 7 March, 1948, 14.
44. "2 Hope to Collect 3-Billion Claim to Manhattan," *The [Louisville] Courier-Journal*, 10 November 1949, p. 11, cols. 1-3.
45. R.G. 28/68/234, 390-1.
46. "Relatives Lay Claim to Sidewalks of New York," *The Kentucky Post*, 6 March 1981, 2K.
47. *The Edwards Journal* was published in the mid-1980s by Elaine Nelson, in Laurel, Maryland, as a clearinghouse for the exchange of genealogical data about Edwards families. Among its features there was always a reprint of a newspaper article about the Edwards Estate. Her intent was "to

preserve this part of the Edwards tradition and heritage . . ." *The Edwards Journal* also printed lists of Edwardses, for example those enumerated in the 1790 census. It ceased publication in 1985; a letter sent to former subscribers on 1 April 1991 announced a plan to complete back issues and to begin anew. A subscription renewal form was to be sent within one month. Former subscriber Dorothy Potter reported to the author in August 1991 that she had heard nothing more; the author wrote to Ms. Nelson in November 1991, but her letter was not answered.

48. *Historical Sketches of The Edwards and Todd Families and Their Descendants, 1523-1895*, extracted in Elaine Nelson, ed., *The Edwards Journal, Genealogical Data about Edwards Families*, 4 (Oct.-Dec. 1986):75.
49. Bruce Montgomery Edwards, *The Edwards of Northampton [NC]*, (Knoxville, Tenn.: The Montgomery Publishing Co., 1973), 1-2.
50. Glenn Woods, *Edwards Genealogy* (n.p.: privately printed, 1970s), 1. A copy is in the author's possession and in the library of the Brown County [Ohio] Genealogical Society. Mr. Woods provided no sources for this account, and it is important to report that Queen Anne died in 1714, making the story incorrect on at least one basic point of fact.
51. Betty Dickson Casteel, *Edwards, Who-Was-Where-When* (n.p.: privately printed, 1983), iii-iv. [FHL 929.273 Ed95c]
52. Mabel Scruggs Sommerfeld, *Andrew Edwards, a Revolutionary Soldier* (n.p.: privately printed, 1969), 2-3. [FHL #872807]
53. Bush-Beauchamp Family Papers, S. W. D. Stone, "The Traditional History of the Edwards Family," 2-4; Stone does not identify his mother's given name. Stone's account and letters replying to the Stone brothers were transcribed in 1925 by Roberta Y. Bush on 14-16 March 1925. The letters are identified in the text by date and may be found on pages following Stone's account of the Edwards family tradition.
54. Actually, James Edwards was baptized on 6 May 1727 in the parish of Midmar, Aberdeenshire, the son of Willm. Edward and Helen Law. Baptismal Register, Midmar, Aberdeen, Scotland, 65. [FHL #993344]
55. Letter of Orange Edwards to J. H. Rains, 30 January 1891, copy courtesy of Norma Rains, Maysville, Ky.
56. Notes of J. H. Rains's interview of Orange Edwards, copy courtesy of Norma Rains.
57. Baptismal Register, Midmar, Aberdeen, Scotland, 74. [FHL #993344]
58. Helen Hinchliff, "James and Alexander Edwards, Two Seafaring Ancestors," *Aberdeen and Northeast Scotland Family History Society Journal*, forthcoming.
59. *The Walter Beach Plume Records*, (Newark, N.J.: 1933), transcribed by Nova Caesarea Chapter NSDAR, pp. 9. 19. [FHL #873446]. Plume lists the wife of John Corbie as Martha Kierstede, b. 1684, great-granddaughter of Anneke Jans and twin sister of Hans Kierstede, son of Lucas and Rachel (Kip) Kierstede. Hans was baptised on 3 August 1684 at the Reformed Dutch Church in New York City, but no twin was baptised with him. *NYGBR* 10:79.